GNOSTICISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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PREFACE

Gnosticism has provoked attention from New Testament scholarship in recent years, for it illuminates many a verse otherwise not understood. The present work is intended to further research in this connection and perhaps suggest a larger field of study. Our thesis will be that Gnosticism represents the chief heresy of apostolic days, as well as of post-apostolic times. From Matthew to Revelation, apparently, evidence may be gleaned in confirmation and support. A chronological treatment has been accorded the New Testament, in order to synchronize unfolding of error with gradual disclosure of truth.

Premature generalization and somewhat arbitrary judgment have marked not a few investigators. It is sincerely hoped that the author does not wander afar. He must confess that great libraries and years of inquiry could not be made available. In consequence, details have been omitted lest any hasty inference result. Rather than discuss minor points, he has sketched a whole panorama that will indicate the probable manner whereby Gnosticism evolved. Of course, such an extended view lays one open to still another danger, that of shallowness. Conscious, then, of the several perils besetting him, the writer offers his exegesis with both diffidence and anticipation. May the effort serve at least to recommend a valuable theme to workmen more able. If however aught of profit be discovered here, let an institution receive the praise. And that is Dallas Theological Seminary.

GNOSTICISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter I

THE NATURE OF GNOSTICISM

The first covenant with God that man knew, the first temptation which befell him, the primal sin committed by a human being, even the fall of mankind, all pertain to knowledge and the ceaseless human craving for enlightenment. As a rational creature, man desires to learn his niche in the universe, provided he stops for the sake of sober thought. Mortal men have diligently searched for truth one age after the next. Long years ago when the church was spreading far and wide through the Roman Empire, an intellectual movement likewise began to flourish. Known today as Gnosticism, that significant enterprise and particularly its pronounced effect upon the New Testament we intend in the following thesis to examine closely. Weighty reasons can be adduced that will amply justify our investigation. Gnostic tenets formed the greatest danger within the ancient church. Also, the apostolic Scriptures cannot be understood to the full, if a gnostic peril is not appreciated. Furthermore, the Christian will not take warning against modern Gnosticism, unless portions of our New Testament relative to the heresy are fathomed.

Various analyses for Gnosticism have been constructed by scholars. At least seven characteristics none overlooks. They believe that Gnosticism as a whole inculcated esoteric and syncretic dogma, while its teaching covers especially Theology Proper, cosmology, dualism of spirit and matter, Docetism and Soteriology. All these doctrines should be pondered with care before we proceed.

Esoterism differentiated a gnostic sect from Christian congregations.

All Gnostics lived in the conviction that they owned a secret and mysterious knowledge--one in no way accessible to men outside, not based on reflection or on scientific proof and inquiry but on revelation.[1] Irenaeus describes a certain Gnostic:

> "The successor of Simon Magus was Menander, a Samaritan by birth, who also became a perfect adept in magic. He affirms that the first power is unknown to all, but that he himself is the person who has been sent forth by the invisible beings as a saviour for the salvation of men. The world was made by angels, who, as he also, like Simon, says, were produced by the Ennoea. He gives also, as he affirms, by means of the magic which he teaches knowledge, so that one may overcome those angels that made the world. For his disciples obtain the resurrection by the fact that they are baptized into him, and they can die no more, but remain immortal without ever growing old."[2]

Syncretism too marked off Gnosticism. This movement can be regarded as the fantastic product gained by blending some Christian ideas together (particularly one, redemption in view of the Cross) with speculations and imaginings derived from a medley of sources--Greek, Jewish, Parsic; religions, philosophies, theosophies, mysteries--in a period when the human mind experienced a kind of ferment and opinions of every sort were jumbled in an unimaginable welter.[3] Recall the quotation given above.

Gnostic principles may be summed up by five doctrines. In the first place, a peculiar theology was formulated. Gnostics conceived a higher world where the better element exists in purity and power, living there in hierarchies known as aeons, which perhaps are graduated, yet all divine and manifesting the central source whom we call God. That world is styled the Pleroma. The numbering and the naming of the many aeons

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[1] Bousset.

[2] Quoted by Ayer, A Source Book for Ancient Church History, p. 81.

[3] Orr.

seem the most fanciful tenet in gnostic speculation. Since a queer Theology Proper like this is framed by Gnosticism, one must conclude that it amounts to a denial of personality to God. Another quotation from the gnostic opponent, Irenaeus, wherein he expounds a second man's belief, illustrates:

> "Basilides, to appear to have discovered something more sublime and plausible, gives an immense development to his doctrine. He declares that in the beginning the Nous was born of the unborn Father, that from him in turn was born the Logos, then from the Logos the Phronesis, from the Phronesis Sophia and Dynamis, and from Dynamis and Sophia the powers and principalities and angels, whom he calls the first; and that by these the first heaven was made. Then by emanation from these others were formed, and these created another heaven similar to the first. And in like manner, when still others had been formed by emanations from these, corresponding to those who were over them, they framed another third heaven; and from this third heaven downward there was a fourth succession of descendants; and so on, in the same manner, they say that other and still other princes and angels were formed, and three hundred and sixty-five heavens. Wherefore the year contained the same number of days in conformity with the number of the heavens."[4]

From viewing gnostic theology we may pass easily to a study of the cosmology. The intricacy in the cosmological scheme adopted has already been shown by the last citation. Gnostic leaders set forth a system of emanations or aeons in which it is assumed that from the supreme deity emanated a somewhat lesser world, from this world a second, and so on until the divine element (of life) became so weakened and attenuated that the genesis of a partly, or even wholly, evil world appears both possible and comprehensible. Then the cosmology and theology rest upon a common basis. All gnostic thought seemingly is rooted in a strong, Oriental dualism. The two worlds of the good and the evil, the one divine

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[4] Ibid., pp. 85-86.

and the one material (ὕλη), the worlds of light and of darkness, are opposed in sharpest contrast. Thereby the material world is accounted the true seat of evil, full of active energies and hostile forces. Even when a Gnostic makes an attempt at reconciliation between the two realms, it remains quite clear how strong was the original dualism which has to be overcome. Plainly the emanation theory and the teaching about God can be explained with ease after a recognition of dualism. To what limits such a philosophy would lead thinkers becomes manifest in the statement of Marcion reported by Irenaeus: "He taught . . . . that it is impossible for the body to partake of salvation, because it was taken from the earth."[5] Once we acknowledge that all matter looks inherently evil, moreover, the doctrine of Christ's incarnation should not be admitted. Therefore to a Gnostic the Lord Jesus (although He be reckoned the very highest emanation from the Father) could not have soiled Himself by appropriating a material body. Had man beheld Him on earth, it must be regarded a delusion; for He must never have taken a human form. Accordingly Docetism arose with vigor in order to elucidate the Christian tenet of incarnation.

Gnosticism also emphasized Soteriology. For Gnostics salvation lay at the bottom of all existence and history. As in other mystical religions, so with a gnostic system the ultimate object is individual salvation, the assurance of a fortunate destiny for the soul after death (Mellone, whom we follow throughout this paragraph). As in others, so in this one the central object of worship is a redeemer-deity who has already trodden the difficult way which the faithful have to pursue.

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

And as in all mystic sects, so here too, holy rites and formulas, acts of initiation and of consecration, all those things which we name sacraments, play a very prominent role. We constantly meet the idea that the soul, upon leaving a body, finds its path to the highest heaven opposed by many deities and demons of lower realms; and only when it comes into possession of the names for these demons, and can repeat the proper holy formula, or is prepared with the right symbol, or has been anointed by the holy oil, finds its way unhindered to the heavenly home. An exposition of the dogma inculcated by the Ophites which is furnished through Celsus,[6] and in connection with Celsus by Origen, appears instructive here. Anz has deemed Soteriology the central doctrine of Gnosticism. Yet to the Gnostic, salvation seems always a myth, a history of bygone events, an allegory or figure, not a historical experience. That will explain the labored and artificial manner in which the person of Jesus Christ is joined by many gnostic teachers with the early gnostic conception of redemption.

After surveying the several elements that constitute Gnosticism, we may profit from studying the name attached to this notable enterprise. Gnostic sectaries cannot be esteemed the very leaders in culture and wisdom for their day. Indeed, Gnosticism has not been depicted as chiefly a rational tendency concerned with knotty problems of philosophy, or even a reconciliation of religion with human speculation and theology. At the height of the movement gnostic circles numbered among their adherents theologians and men distinguished for scientific learning. The

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[6] Origen vi. 25 ff.

term gnosis with the meaning *knowledge* or *understanding*, however, was not assigned to groups with a view to their reputation as thinkers; but it has been maintained that the word more likely signified *revelation* in accord with gnostic esoterism. Often the Gnostic asserted that their tenets came directly from primitive Christianity and the lips of Jesus Christ, in addition to His disciples and friends with whom they also wished to allege a connection through secret tradition; otherwise they boldly derived gnostic belief from prophets of their own order. Such disclosure, the *illuminati* said, had been preserved in the mystic writings which some groups cherished.[7] Thus a gnostic sect could boast a knowledge of the variety that ordinary Christians would not secure apart from an initiate's help. Furthermore, only in the acquisition of these facts can any deliverance consist. Because of the special revelation which they were affirming, certain men dared to call themselves γνωστικοί. Then the Fathers, especially Irenaeus, were fond of using 1 Timothy 6:20 when bent on criticism of different teachers. As a comprehensive name for all the radical circles leaving the church on account of mysticism, the designation now in use--that is, Gnostic, must never be thought an ancient term. No one coined a word for the varying systems abroad. Hence the limits permitted with the present-day appellation may at times look arbitrary.

If gnostic doctrines are considered mystic teaching, the question arises promptly: What bond with religion do they indicate? Mellone has decided that Gnosticism makes individual salvation its ultimate goal.

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[7] Liechtenhahn.

That being granted, the movement will display marked affinities with religion. Surely the large mystic sects referred to occult revelation and wisdom, like gnostic cults. So Gnosticism in all its various parts, form, and character could fall under the classification of mysticism. But Rutherfurd experiences grave difficulty when he attempts to analyze the religious nature and background peculiar to this enterprise. He has coped, and rightly so, with the fact that Gnosticism does not appear a homogeneous system of either religion or human philosophy, since it embraces many widely diversified sects, which held tenets drawn from a great variety of sources. Neander weighs the leading gnostic pronouncements skilfully. With him they represent the first remarkable endeavor to introduce into Christianity the existing elements of mental culture, and to render it more complete on the hitherto rather neglected side of theoretical knowledge. Gnostic teaching exhibits an effort, he judges, whereby the ancient world in its deep longing after enlightenment and its great discontent with the present would fain appropriate and hold the treasures which the Christian faith offered. We feel impelled to take sides against the scholarly Neander; and in due course our reasons will be supplied as the Biblical witness opposing Gnosticism is produced. Suffice it to point out here: gnostic speculation apparently connotes a revolt from Christianity, not delight over the apostolic Scriptures. Remember the gnostic vagaries cited earlier. Mitchell may approximate the correct understanding of all gnostic thought, however, because he distinguishes between the Christian system and its predecessor carefully. His conclusion has been worded:

> "The beginnings of Gnosticism can not be traced or ascribed to any one person, place or time. This much only

> is clear, that Gnostic 'tendencies' had been cropping out here and there throughout the Orient long prior to the rise of any definite leader or system. The fact is Gnosticism was but one of the variegated products of the gradual intermingling of the old faiths and philosophies under the tolerant rule of Rome. The movement, however, did not become aggressive and missionary until after the advent of Christianity. The zeal of the early Christians and their radiant hopes intensified the 'general thirst for religion,' and there sprang up here and there a peculiar eclectic, syncretic religion, which in due time came to be known as Gnosticism."[8]

Gnostic thought perhaps is related to philosophy, as much as to mysticism. Some authorities expound the system with greater emphasis upon the former, while others stress the latter. Griffith Thomas believes it to be intellectual activity concentrated on the solution of life's problems, the more important of which number but two: (1) How the creation of the world by a perfectly good God can be linked with the evil present therein; (2) How the human spirit has become imprisoned in matter, and how it may be emancipated. No doubt the stress upon religion or philosophy varied with the different groups, some being more interested in the one than in the other. Added facts with respect to the origin of Gnosticism within spiritual and intellectual realms we need not record, since enough has now been furnished so as to introduce the particular subject of our research.

The gnostic movement as a whole may be described in several ways, depending upon the vantage point assumed. If Rutherfurd's judgment that it constituted neither a kind of religion nor of intellectuality be accepted, surely we can escape an ill balanced decision. Herewith the writer gives the kindest appraisal of Gnosticism that one could

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[8] A Standard Bible Dictionary, art. Gnosticism, p. 294.

submit, not to sacrifice the truth, nor be unconscious of the real difficulty which arises in estimating and defining such a noteworthy enterprise: Gnostic is the comprehensive name used to include a large number of widely ramified sects on the borderland between Christianity and heathen mysticism or philosophy, that flourished in the second century.[9]

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[9] Cf. Headlam's definition, H. D. B., art. Gnosticism.

Chapter II

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The beginnings of Gnosticism cannot be traced to one person, place, or time. Long before the rise of sects and leaders, gnostic propensities became visible here and there in the Orient. It has been observed with justice how gnostic thought constituted only one of the diverse systems which originated from an intermingling of national religions and philosophies within the Roman Empire.[1] Christianity itself brought the movement to its developed stage, a place of vitality and influence. For the Christian faith had no doubt intensified religious zeal throughout the world. Of course, when this new enterprise swept from Jerusalem over the Empire, not all accepted its message as the absolute and necessary religion. Thus it fostered the growth of a peculiar eclectic, syncretic faith, known finally as Gnosticism, since although many refused to leave an old cult in favor of the new they nevertheless felt inclined to appropriate from the Christian revelation whatever impressed them as congenial. Professor E. Scott points out that for a long time the pagan sects had lost their influence, and consequently had been displaced by various creeds spun from philosophical speculations. They too were found unsatisfying, but had been somewhat vitalized by union with the theosophies of the East. Then an attempt was made on the part of such an eclecticism to effect also an alliance with Christianity. This

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[1] Mitchell.

effort did not prove to no avail, because minority groups in the congregations had already expressed some dissatisfaction over the simplicity of the gospel. As a whole the Church resisted Gnosticism; yet a small section within its ranks was deceived and won by the doctrinal superiority which Gnostics boasted. So an alien movement gained a foothold in Christendom, and assumed the character of heresy.

Through the centuries Gnosticism could not form a very compact organization. Harnack declares as his opinion:

> "There can be no doubt that the gnostic propaganda was seriously hindered by the inability to organize and discipline churches, which is characteristic of all philosophic systems of religion."[2]

Moeller remarks that the sectaries desired recognition and adherents first of all from the Christian communities. But the very fact that the enterprise finally established itself as a school or schools of thought within the orthodox circle, wherever possible, resolved it into a subtle and dangerous heresy.[3] Gnostic thinkers in the East seemed almost able to give the young Christianity a speculative coloring, or at times to secure genuine respect and recognition (e. g., Tatian and Bardesanes in Syria). Among the Christians of the Graeco-Roman sphere Gnostics boldly endeavored to appear as esoterics. A twofold aim was manifested: to have others account them the spiritual elite, and to sustain connections with the professing Church. Notwithstanding all the prestige gained, the outstanding representatives of Gnosticism were always barred from congregations.

Detail regarding gnostic coteries and their famous men we can omit

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[2] Quoted by I. S. B. E., art. Gnosticism, p. 1247.
[3] Gurney.

in a prefatory chapter. A classification of the numerous groups will suffice. Gurney believes that analysis does not look easy or profitable. Yet several divisions are suggested by ancient and modern scholars alike, some of which are advocated strongly. Bigg lends his approval to one type, while Orr espouses another. The present writer agrees with both, so as to link together the two interpretations, the one geographical and the other historical. Both classifications are divided into three parts, the parallel sections of which coincide exactly in scope. Whereas Bigg names Samaritan, Syrian, and Egyptian Gnostics (Marcion lived in Pontus; hence will escape mention under this scheme), Orr analyzes gnostic systems into the early, the semi-developed, and the developed. The Samaritan leaders include Dositheus, Simon Magus, Menander, and Cleobius, all belonging to the first century. Dositheus may possibly be designated a pre-Christian. From Syria arose Saturnilus; a number of obscure sects known as Naassenes (Ophites, or serpent worshippers), Peratae, and Sethiani; perhaps Tatian with the Encratites and Bardesanes. To Egypt we attach Cerinthus, Valentinus, Basilides and Carpocrates. Gnosticism was proclaimed at Rome by Cerdon, Valentinus, Marcion, and Marcellina between 130 and 140 A. D.

A potent heresy like the gnostic system rocked the Church to its depths. The whole of Irenaeus, a great part in others such as Tertullian, all that Hippolytus wrote, and no small portion in Clement of Alexandria, for instance, combat the movement. Extant apologies devoted to Gnosticism bulk large in the patristic literature. Besides, many apologetic works have disappeared, e. g., those of Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, and Agrippa Castor. But in fairness to all the Gnostics involved, it should be observed that few apologetes had personal acquaintance

with the movement, since most of their knowledge was derived apparently from gnostic books, which they might not have cared to expound very intelligently when speaking of the contents; furthermore, some apologists did little more than copy predecessors. On the other hand, Clement of Alexandria writes with some measure of sympathy and desire to arrive at the real meaning behind the tenets. Similarly Origen makes large extracts from Heracleon's volume on the fourth Gospel, treating the author with natural enmity and yet without unfairness.[4]

Uhlhorn declares that Christianity battled against the doctrines of Gnosticism as for its life. The struggle led to the earlier developments of Christian theology. Likewise a powerful impulse was given toward the formation of a new canon, embracing apostolic testimony, and also toward the composition of the earliest creed. Whenever it seemed important to insure to the full any creedal purity, delivery of the old, apostolic rule of faith gradually connected itself with the episcopal office. The more that a need for strong Christian authority was experienced, the more did a hierarchy increase its sway. Probably the foremost Gnostics in point of freshness and strength of mind ranked with any apologist in the second century.[5] Orthodox Christians therefore had their victory over the subtle heresy only after long years and bitter conflict.

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[4] Bigg.

[5] Rainy.

Chapter III

SOURCE MATERIAL

From the teeming gnostic literature we possessed until recent times only little beside the quotations gleaned from patristic writers. Now Egypt has yielded a large number of manuscripts, chiefly in the Coptic. Original and complete productions survive alone from the period of decadent Gnosticism. For instance, the noted treatise called the Pistis Sophia probably dates back to the third century. Mellone decides that gnostic compositions, for the most part, were sacrificed to the destructive zeal shown by Christianity. Sufficient from the original literature nevertheless remains, so that one may check the citations in the Fathers, as well as reconstruct to some extent the various systems taught. Numerous allusions will be observed in the apologists. The Encyclopaedia Britannica esteems a long statement recorded by Hippolytus in the fifth and sixth books of the Philosophumena the most valuable fragment. An extract found in the letter of Ptolemaeus to Flora, preserved by Epiphanius, Haeres. xxxiii. 3-7, seems important, too. Generally the gnostic pronouncements are also contained in apocryphal histories of the apostles. Besides we might specify the pseudo-Clementine Homilies and Recognitions, which come from the third century. Gnosticism and the related apologies die out during the next century.

Gnostic writings cover a wide range of subject matter. Gospels (Eve, Mary, Jude, Thomas, Philip, etc.), acts (of Peter, John, Thomas, Andrew, Matthew), apocalypses (of Adam, Abraham, Nicotheus, Zoroaster,

etc.), psalms (Valentinus, Bardesanes, Marcionites), hymns (Naasseni, Bardesanes, *Books of Jeû*), homilies (Valentinus), and odes (Basilides) appeared. Similarly a theological literature was sent out, including dogmatic and philosophical treatises (Isidore, Valentinus, Theodotus, Bardesanes, Marcion), commentaries on sacred books and prophetic revelations (Basilides, Heracleon, Isidore), critical investigations (Ptolemaeus, Apelles), mystery books (*Pistis Sophia*, *Books of Jeû*, etc.). These authors deemed the apostolic canon an authoritative body of revelation and expounded it accordingly, perhaps before the orthodox developed it thus. Such an achievement, however, is offset by the radical criticism which they directed boldly against the New Testament. With respect to gnostic gospels and acts, Bigg judges that the remains suffice to indicate both the purposes and methods of the original writers, though seemingly they have been remodeled to an unknown degree.

Earlier we have outlined the ecclesiastical opposition to Gnosticism. The particular facts concerning a literary refutation of the Gnostics, of course, were reserved for the present chapter. Krüger, whose excellent outline has been followed in the paragraph above, maintains that the first rebuttals completed by the Fathers have not lived, but in all probability their substance is preserved in extant works treating heresy (Irenaeus, e. g.). According to the same critic, the serious defect with all these endeavors arises with the evident impossibility of adaptation. The writers look eager to impute motives and intentions to the Gnostic, which either he possesses not at all, or at least does not hold and pursue in the manner charged to him. Justin set down the most ancient refutation, and called it a *Syntagma* against all heretical doctrine (about 150 A. D.).

He also may have framed a special polemic opposing Marcion. Both compositions are lost, although the former is alluded to in the Apol. of Justin, and the latter is quoted by Irenaeus, iv. 6. 2. Irenaeus lived not long after Justin. In the first book of his treatise, Adv. Haer. (about 180 A. D.), he furnishes a detailed account of gnostic teaching. Upon Irenaeus and probably Justin too Hippolytus drew for his own Syntagma (beginning of the third century). This writing is lost, yet from three recensions it can be freshly built and not without certainty. A second production of Hippolytus, the so-called Philosophumena (it remains under the name of Origen), is supplemented by new, gnostic original sources. Mellone affirms that those sources have met lately with an unfavorable criticism. Noteworthy references to Gnosticism can also be noticed here and there in the Stromateis, that Clement of Alexandria composed. The Excerpta ex Theodoto seems especially important. Origen contains a wealth of material, Contra Celsum in particular. From Tertullian we value: De praescriptione haer., Adv. Marc., Adv. Hermogenem, Adv. Valentin. The dialogue of Adamantius with the Gnostics, De recta in deum fide (beginning of the fourth century), will reward attention. Epiphanius enters into his Panarion some valuable information gained from personal acquaintance with gnostic sectaries; but Theodoret of Cyrus (d. 455) adds no more. By this time Gnosticism is vanishing.

Often a number of New Testament verses have been related to the gnostic movement, including statements in Colossians, the Pastorals, certain of the General Epistles, Revelation. The Tübingen School observed such an intimate connection between these and second century Gnosticism, that it understood the epistles in question to be a literature

written after the apostolic day. Their criticism led frequently to expounding the pertinent verses as a sign of incipient gnostic thought; and restriction of all the gnostic allusions to a single book, 1 John, since that was finished near the turn in the century. Wherever the epistles had been assigned traditionally to a generation earlier, the words were explained as due to local influences, Alexandrian teaching, or interpolation. But an increasing agreement, declares Heffern, as to the results of studies in late Judaism on the one hand, and in second century Gnosticism on the other, and of the relationship of both to the history of Oriental and of Graeco-Roman religions, has suggested a new construction for Biblical references to the gnostic danger. It is known by the now familiar name, Pre-Christian Gnosticism. Thus a possible allusion in the New Testament to some gnostic view will not afford proof of second century origin. Pre-gnostic, incipient gnostic, semi-gnostic features in the New Testament--common expressions today--are considered not as the earliest indications of Gnosticism in general, but of early stages in the special enterprise of the second century.

Chapter IV

FIRST TRACES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament enshrines a testimony to Christianity. This new faith, to be sure, did not bear its witness in a world entirely receptive or passive. A careful examination of the apostolic literature will evince the fact that saints had prolonged battle with several, contrary forces. Perhaps not one book of the New Testament is lacking an apologetic element. Since the Tübingen movement, Scripture polemic has for the most part been referred to the Judaistic heresy. No doubt the Jewish controversy does loom as the most serious factor in the ancient church. But critics are coming now to recognize the presence of a second and equally bitter enemy, namely, Gnosticism. Even before the period of modern study New Testament scholars had observed a false teaching distinct from Judaism. In the seventeenth century, for instance, Hammond advocated cognizance of the gnostic threat.[1] We purpose, therefore, to search all the apostolic writings for evidence of Gnosticism, commencing with the earliest and proceeding to the last works.

James' epistle has been dated by good authorities before any other book. This date granted (45-50 A. D.), perhaps few will discover any allusions to a gnostic foe in the epistle. On the other hand, if the letter belongs to the year 62 A. D., Pfleiderer espouses a view which has exercised influence over quite a number. Compare Grafe, Stellung und Bedeutung des Jakobusbriefes, page 44. Reference to a gnostic tendency

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[1] Heffern.

has been found in the contrast of true and false wisdom, 3:13-18; the word ψυχική, 3:15; the use of τέλειος, 1:4, 7, 25, 3:2, and τελειόω, 2:22; the blame of God for temptation, 1:13; patent disrespect for and judging of the law, 4:11 (Cerdon, Marcion, e. g.); the misuse of the Pauline doctrine of faith, 2:14-26. See also Pfleiderer, *Urchristentum*, 2nd ed., ii, pages 545-547.

Granting that all the supposed indications of Gnosticism in James may not appear very likely, doubtless one subject among them a student ought to consider, namely, perfection. Fausset understands this as the chief emphasis throughout the epistle, because he declares: "To sketch 'the perfect man,' *continuing* in the Gospel *law of liberty*, is its theme" (italics his). According to Trench, τέλειος signifies nothing but a full development in Christian experience.

> "The various applications of τέλειος are all referable to the τέλος, which is its ground. In a natural sense the τέλειοι are the adult, who, having reached the full limit of stature, strength, and mental power appointed to them, have in these respects attained their τέλος, as distinguished from the νέοι or παῖδες, young men or boys. . . . This image of full completed growth, as contrasted with infancy and childhood, underlies the ethical use of τέλειοι by St. Paul, he setting these over against the νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ . . . . Nor is this ethical use of τέλειος confined to Scripture. . . . With the heathen, those also were τέλειοι who had been initiated into the mysteries. . . ."[2]

James 1:4 probably stands at the head of the apostolic word, in order to begin the stress on perfection at once. Notice the five truths concerning perfection which James has stated: Perfectness is achieved only by ὑπομονή and its ἔργον τέλειον (1:4), i. e., constancy in faith, wherefrom a completed character may be expected to spring;[3] Perfect gifts

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[2] *Synonyms of the New Testament*, 7th ed., pp. 71-72.

[3] Ropes.

of any kind must descend from the Father of lights (1:17); the will of God is represented as a perfect law of liberty (1:25); by works alone can faith really attain maturity (2:22); control of the tongue marks a perfect Christian (3:2). In opposition to Gnosticism, then, James inculcates persevering fidelity, not secrecy; gratitude to God (not to man) for every perfect gift; lawful liberty, not freedom without divine revelation of a legal nature; faith accompanied by works, not a faith devoid of fruit; proper use of the tongue (cf. 3:15, wherein ἐπίγειος and ψυχική are applied to ungodly wisdom--a curious resemblance to the gnostic designation for the two lower divisions of men as χοϊκοί and ψυχικοί).

Beyond question James has dealt a crushing stroke to one of the chief features in Gnosticism, even if a Jewish gnostic trend may not be construed here. The exclusiveness, pride, and impracticality of esotericism have been dismissed for the saint. Yet the apostle invites, rather he urges, all Christians to strive for perfection, and heed the instruction set down. He would teach them the actual content of perfectness, its true source, morality, brotherliness.

1 and 2 Thessalonians follow James in point of time, according to the New Testament chronology generally adopted. Both the companion works center around one theme, eschatology. Other Pauline letters discuss future things, but not with an equal insistence. Various explanations have been submitted for this peculiarity. Milligan cites 1 Thessalonians 1:9 ff. as a good summary of the earliest, Pauline missionary-preaching, in order to elucidate the unique contents of these epistles. Against his judgment, however, stands the leading testimony to the Gentiles, Romans. Does not Romans 1:1-17 convey a word different from 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10? In addition, see Acts 17, and particularly

verse 3, because it embodies the very truth proclaimed by the apostle while evangelizing Thessalonica. Other authorities have asserted that the emphasis is due to an interest that Paul abandoned in later years. But how can this view be substantiated, when the same conceptions are repeated in succeeding books? 1 Thessalonians 4:13 ff. recalls a passage like 1 Corinthians 15, while 2 Thessalonians 2 compares favorably with Romans 9-11. Then, some have thought the prominence must be attributed to ignorance on the part of the readers. Yet 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 hardly agrees with such a construction. Only one possibility remains, if neither Paul nor the church will furnish a reason for the phenomenon (so far as we know, the Thessalonians had never questioned an eschatological verity). Doubtless an outside influence should be seen at work. The one reference in the whole correspondence to unsaved Jews, 1 Thessalonians 2:14, has satisfied most expositors, that the controversial statements were all directed against unbelieving Hebrews. Judaizing activity usually is not detected; many exegetes suppose, nevertheless, that a Jewish antagonism can account for the large section in 1 Thessalonians devoted to throwing discredit upon the apostle's reputation and credentials. Not much remains to this argument, after Heffern weighs it:

> "But we must observe that this is not the characteristic and constant form of Jewish attack. They did not concern themselves with the innuendoes in this [second] chapter in regard to Paul's apostolic authority, theological conceptions, rhetorical methods, pastoral relations, personal purity, petty mercenary aims. Theirs, in Judaea, Thessalonica and always was open war upon him to the death as an apostate attempting to destroy the faith and customs of Israel; and this, under domination of their special hatred of his Gospel to the Gentiles."[4]

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[4] Apology and Polemic in the New Testament, p. 215.

Certainly Acts 17:5 ff. confirms this refutation. 1 Thessalonians 2, where Paul mentions the Hebrews, voices thanksgiving to God on account of the readers' faith in the divine revelation. Since Israelites persecuted the Christian church as a heretical wing of Judaism, the allusion to them seems natural. After 2:14-16 the writer to all appearances drops the subject of a harassing from Israel. Chapter 3 adds very little.

For the most part Christianity encountered but two attacks from foes within, namely, the gnostic and Judaizing heresies. If then the condition reflected in the Thessalonian letters was not caused by the latter, it looks probable that the former is involved. Such an interpretation, however, runs counter to the exegetical tradition upheld in all the recent commentaries and works on the apostolic age, Lütgert[5] and Heffern excepted. Professor Heffern comments that Lütgert has produced monographs covering nine Pauline epistles and 1 John (by the year, 1920), all of them being written as preparatory studies to a book upon the apostolic age. For most critics, 1 and 2 Thessalonians depict just a new church containing an insubordinate party. Ofttimes it is felt that the disorderly manifest a general tendency in this congregation. Such ones were waiting morbidly for the Savior to return. Thereby they were led into neglect of normal and practical pursuits of life, with the result that they began to experience need and demand support. Their failure to receive aid begot in them the spirit of rebellion--something closely paralleled in cases of like fanaticism through the centuries.

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[5] *Freiheitspredigt u. Schwarmgeister in Korinth: Ein Beitrag zur Charakteristik der Christuspartei*; *Die Irrlehrer der Pastoralbriefe*; *Die Vollkommenen in Philipperbrief u. die Enthusiasten in Thessalonich*; *Amt u. Geist in Kampf*; *Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem*.

Incidentally, the two scholars listed above will agree that all the trouble in Thessalonica, not excluding controversial elements, reverts to a certain Gnosticism.

Let us confront the question squarely. Was the distress created by insubordination, or by the attack of subtle gnostic forces? Paul alludes to four chief problems in this church: on the one hand, his apostolic integrity (1 Thess. 2-3); and on the other hand, the readers' morality (1 Thess. 4:1-12), grasp of prophecy (1 Thess. 4:13-5:11, 2 Thess. 2), and united testimony (1 Thess. 5:12-28, 2 Thess. 3). Already it has been demonstrated that the first assault could not be linked with hostile Jews, much less the faithful Thessalonians. A gnostic tendency, however, may prove a satisfactory explanatory even here. In sharpest contrast with Pauline recognition of a lost world (1 Thess. 2:1-2), Gnostics sought its favor (Jude 17, cf. 1 Thess. 2:4 itself). Different from unselfish Pauline evangelism (1 Thess. 2:3-8), gnostic teachers lived in πλάνη (Eph. 4:14), ἀκαθαρσία (Jude 8), δόλος (Acts 13:10), πλεονεξία (2 Pet. 2:3, 14). And contrary to the sterling pastoral care of Paul (1 Thess. 2:9-3:13), his daring opponents evoked no little disturbance (2 Thess. 3:6 ff., calling to mind 1 Tim. 1:9, Tit. 1:10). This final comparison introduces the last difficulty: Thessalonica's united testimony threatened by a band known as ἄτακτοι (1 Thess. 5:14, etc.). Although most expositors are content to identify the ἄτακτοι with the souls upset by prophetical teaching, a far more serious situation may have arisen in the young church. Paul commends the whole assembly for its spiritual development (1 Thess. 1, 2 Thess. 1); yet thinks it needful to write an apologia (1 Thess. 2-3), to exhort them

about sanctification (1 Thess. 4:1-12), and to review prophetical truth (1 Thess. 4:13-5:11). Ἄτακτοι means more than people of unbecoming conduct. The apostle employs it in the Pastorals for gnostic sectaries. Indeed, its root suggests many Pauline emphases gathering around the one word τάξις.[6] Τάξις in the church (Col. 2:5) is based on the ordinance of the apostle in all congregations (διατάσσω, 1 Cor. 11:34), while resting ultimately on the ἐπιταγή come from the Lord (1 Tim. 1:1), and being exhibited in the proper submission (ὑποτάσσω, Eph. 5:24) or obedience of Christians (ὑπακοή, 1 Pet. 1:22). Evidently ἄτακτοι borders on rejection of the church order, its apostolic tradition concerned with faith, morals, and hope, its ministry and discipline. When Paul does not stigmatize the rebellious as apostate (1 Thess. 5:14, etc.), a full-blown Gnosticism should not be construed for the Thessalonian epistles any more than for James. But esotericism may lie behind the whole adverse trend manifested in the congregation, just as in James. For this will accord with the strange emphasis upon prophecy that the letters bear.

From 2 Thessalonians 2:2, ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ Κυρίου, one can learn the key error in the doctrine expounded by the enemies of the apostle. They taught that "the day of the Lord is now present."[7] Both the English versions fail to show the true meaning of ἐνέστηκεν, when they render it by "is at hand" and "is just at hand." Before the day of Jehovah could begin, the rapture of the saints must occur. Significant to observe, the translation has already been delineated in the first epistle, as if the writer realized right there definite need for

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[6] Heffern.
[7] Milligan.

clarifying his previous instruction about the Lord's Day (1 Thess. 5:1-2). 2 Thessalonians, composed shortly after the first letter because the perturbed church had not been calmed by 1 Thessalonians, pursues the same general theme; yet includes a further disclosure of the future, so as to prove absolutely that the Second Advent had not dawned. The esoteric feature here is discovered in the fact that the resurrection has come according to this antagonistic construction of prophecy. Compare 2 Timothy 2:17-18, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who maintained that the resurrection was fulfilled, i. e. a spiritual one--denying thereby a literal rising from the dead. Note 1 Corinthians 15:52 as further evidence of this tenet. Recall likewise Acts 17:32. Gnostic dualism to be sure can account for aversion to bodily resurrection.

Gnostic dogma perhaps influenced the statement of Paul's unusual prayer in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, since 1 Corinthians 15 confutes the doubter by expounding the relationship between the material elements and the immaterial at resurrection, when the Savior returns. Dualism is known to have produced too an antinomian spirit. The Thessalonian correspondence reveals traces of a similar nature, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12. One other sign of gnostic feeling Heffern has elucidated thus (Milligan himself notices the connection with ἀταξία, verse 14):

> "The Thessalonians are enjoined, 1 Thessalonians 5, 19 ff., not to quench the Spirit and not to despise prophesyings. It is a singular command to be addressed to primitive Christians. To them prophecy was one of the highest gifts of the Spirit; a distinguishing mark of Christianity; and one of the strongest attractions in winning converts. The passage, therefore, indicates that the readers are disposed, in repudiating the intruding false teachings of those boasting of their

> prophetic gift, to hold a decreasing estimate of this gift."[8]

Beyond question the apostle exercises reserve in verses alluding to his opponents. Professor Heffern attributes it to a possibility that the apostle lacked sufficiently simple and definite information, for the reason that the ἄτακτοι sowed their seed covertly (2 Thess. 2:2). Such procedure explains, possibly, the slowness in critics to cope with the likelihood of Gnosticism at Thessalonica. Admittedly only an incipient gnostic movement has taken form here. The New Testament in replying to proto-Gnosticism, therefore, answers esotericism more than it does the precise dogmas on which the system is founded. Both James and the Thessalonian epistles contend: Christianity represents an exoteric faith. Whereas James silences heretical pride of character, 1 and 2 Thessalonians deliver an ultimatum to pride of knowledge.

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[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 218. *Contr.* Lightfoot *in loc.*

Chapter V

INFLUENCE UPON THE MAJOR PAULINE EPISTLES

Galatians follows 2 Thessalonians by several years, the North Galatian theory maintains. If this common view is embraced, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Romans appear later, so as to form a second series in New Testament literature, composed of four books. This group will include the major letters of Paul which have been preserved. Few scholars connect Galatians with Gnosticism, as only the minority have linked the first series of books with the heresy. After determining a possibility that gnostic thought affected James, 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, however, the student will examine succeeding epistles the more readily for indications of the same peril. Often critics observe a gnostic danger in 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, or Romans.

Ewald notes that Galatians is distinguished from other Pauline compositions through its obvious unity of purpose. Almost every verse in the book opposes Judaizing heresy. According to the New Testament as it has usually been interpreted, gnostic and Judaistic forces represent the two chief powers to contend with Christianity. Since Galatians refutes Judaizing work in particular, we need not scrutinize its pages for traces of ordinary Gnosticism. Yet a Judaistic system itself, when thoroughly analyzed, perhaps will disclose gnostic influence.

Acts 10 and 11 record the beginnings of Gentile Christianity. Acts 8 had already described the conversion which many Samaritans and an Ethiopian experienced. Peter in the home of Cornelius, however, formally

opened the church to Gentiles. His actions were at once questioned by Hebrew saints in Jerusalem. Only when he had related the whole incident, did every one agree with him that God had now intervened for Gentiles. Not long afterward, a predominantly Gentile church was established in Antioch. The Jerusalem congregation soon despatched Barnabas thither, upon hearing of such a novel situation. Barnabas was so pleased with the church there, he sought Paul in order to enlist his services for the new work. Meanwhile a famine swept over, the world, and prompted a love gift from Antioch, which was directed to needy Jerusalem. Thus the Antioch Christians prospered, until Judaizing visitors arrived from the mother church, Acts 15:1. Paul and Barnabas, lately returned from a successful missionary tour among Gentiles, withstood the new teaching. In consequence the brethren decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and others of their number to Jerusalem, that the apostles and elders might be consulted about the question vexing Antioch. This occasioned the first council of the church. As hitherto in Acts 11, when Peter had been examined for preaching to Cornelius, so here an agreement satisfactory to all believers was reached at last. Converted Pharisees, Acts 15:5 reveals, supported the Judaistic movement calling for Gentile circumcision and obedience to the law of Moses. In addition, Galatians 2 discloses that the controversy required nothing less than Paul's unique testimony, before it could be settled. For there had arisen "false brethren" to complicate the issue, Galatians 2:4. Strangely enough, before the strained feelings of Acts 15 had altogether disappeared, and while Peter and Barnabas were present in the Antioch church, Judaizing sectaries again visited this Gentile assembly. Their false but subtle doctrine led

every one away from the truth, not excepting Peter and Barnabas. The apostle Paul, therefore, had to defend the gospel of grace against the entire primitive church. Afterwards Judaism infected Galatia, and several other congregations.

Judaizing introduced a syncretistic religion. Of its two leading features, the one is derived from Judaism, and the other, from Christianity. The Judaizer would not release Gentile converts from the law of Moses. Likewise he did not forsake Christ, Acts 15:1, 5, Galatians 6:12. Since the Mosaic law was to be enforced, circumcision as the initiatory rite in Jewry figured largely. So engrossed with law observance did the new Judaism become, it overlooked Christ. Circumcision and ritual characterize the movement, Galatians 4:10, 5:1 ff.

Syncretism constituted the dominant note in first-century Hellenism.[1] This understood, how should the legal system of Galatia be evaluated? The attitude of early Hebrew Christians toward Gentiles one can easily fathom, Acts 11. Probably one will sympathize, too, with the Pharisaical judgment on the question, Acts 15, if not with Judaizers like the opponents of Galatians 2. But we must have misgivings with respect to the Galatian heresy, since by the time Galatians was written, Judaistic teachers selected a course of action which must cut them asunder from Christ and taught men so, not without some knowledge of the historical background in Galatians 1-2. Indeed, 2 Corinthians 11, especially verses 4, 13 ff., seems to condemn the Judaizer with unsaved people. Gloag notices how the heresy grew from year to year:

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[1] Kennedy.

> "In the next age the opposition between the Judaizers and Paulinism was pushed to extremes; and two heretical sects, whose views are opposite are mentioned in ecclesiastical history,--the Ebionites and the Marcionites. The Ebionites were the successors of the Judaizing Christians. . . . On the other hand, the Marcionites carried Paulinism to excess. . . . Both Ebionism and Marcionism were alike condemned by the Christian Church, and both have long since disappeared."[2]

If Judaic Christianity, "the gospel of the circumcision" (Gal. 2:7), will not account for Judaizing heresy, only one alternative remains. This effort is linked with the general trend of the age toward syncretic religion.

Let us remember that syncretism marked off the gnostic sects. Gnostics themselves were interested in circumcision and elaborate ritual, Colossians 2. Similarly they boasted a new Christology, 1 John 2. Lightfoot avers that all or nearly all the early gnostic heresies were Judaic, and that for a time a compromise was effected between Gnosticism and Judaism which involved more or less concession on either side. At length, to be sure, the ultimate incompatibility of the two grew evident, so that a precarious alliance was exchanged for open controversy. This final outcome they never reached till the middle of the second century. Meanwhile it was being debated to what extent Judaism might be prepared to make concessions for the sake of her strange partner. The Jewish Essenes, for example, departed from orthodoxy in the matter of sacrifices. Possibly Cerinthus is best entitled to rank as the intermediate link between Judaizing and gnostic circles.[3] Even among the ancients, opposite accounts respecting his doctrines have been given from two opposing points of view, according as the gnostic or the Judaizing element was insisted upon by

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[2] Introduction to the Pauline Epistles, pp. 167-168.

[3] Neander.

the writer. And this dispute has continued into modern times. For chronological reasons, also, Cerinthus may be singled out as representing the transition principle which binds Judaism to Gnosticism. During the apostolic age both the chief heresies developed side by side.

One striking phrase of Galatians may crystallize the gnostic influence upon a perverted Judaism. Its meaning has been discussed from the early Christian centuries until the present. The simple view of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου expressed by Tertullian and advocated by Erasmus, Thayer, Burton, _et al_. will satisfy the conservative mind, no doubt. Aside from anything debatable in the words, Burton thinks it entirely clear that the tenets which Paul was dissuading the Galatians from welcoming seem, in fact, requirements of the law. Furthermore, the words τοῦ κόσμου are most naturally expounded as reference to the world of humanity. Compare Colossians 2:8, παράδοσιν ἀνθρώπων, and 2:22, ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Since law ought to be included with the contents of the phrase, it will amount to a possessive genitive, not a genitive of source. Thus the whole phrase signifies "the rudimentary religious teachings possessed by the race." Colossians 2 applies these very words to gnostic heresy two times, comparable to Galatians 4:3, 9. Hebrews 5:12 uses the term στοιχεῖον metaphorically, too. Like James, 1 Thessalonians, and 2 Thessalonians, therefore, Galatians has betrayed the first working of a gnostic leaven in Christianity.

The Corinthian Epistles differ from Galatians because of a stress upon Christian ethics. No apostolic work reveals so much about the conduct of an individual assembly as 1 Corinthians (I. C. C.). This book concentrates upon seven problems: unity, chapters 1-4, discipline,

chapters 5-6, marriage, chapter 7, liberty, chapters 8-10, worship, chapter 11, ministry, chapters 12-14, and doctrine, chapter 15. 2 Corinthians is distinguished from all other New Testament portions through its sustained apologia for Paul. Chapters 1-5 ably defend the Pauline ministry. A second division, chapters 6-9, contains a new plea for the spiritual life. Finally, chapters 10-13 uphold Pauline authority. Beyond question, the apostle was taxed with an involved situation, when he wrote 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians to a local church.

What caused the ungodly conduct in this place? Most exegetes decide that Judaizing teachers began a campaign that distressed the believers. Doubtless, a sign of Judaistic zeal appears in 1 Corinthians 1:12. Party spirit had arisen, producing within the congregation four well-defined groups. One set favored Paul, the establisher of a Corinthian assembly. And another supported Apollos, who visited the infant church one time. Peter had never served the Corinthians. But a third coterie professed to follow his leadership, since he ranked first among the Twelve. Others formed a Christ party. In their recoil from what they might have justly thought an evil sectarian adherence to human leaders, such Christians evinced even a worse than partisan spirit by claiming to stand preeminently in the same relation to Christ that the rest claimed to stand with regard to Paul, Apollos, or Cephas.[4] The third group surely indicates Judaism.

Particularly from 2 Corinthians do we learn how Judaizers disturbed the young assembly. Plummer maintains that the city was invaded

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[4] Ellicott.

by a band of fanatical Jews, who possessed only a narrow, bigoted view of the gospel. The Pauline message had become an object of hatred to them. Yet they did not try to enforce circumcision, as similar men were attempting to do in Galatia. Their utmost was spent at Corinth, by means of accusation or insinuation, to undermine and destroy all the authority of Paul.

> "We can measure the malignity of their attack by the vehemence of the Apostle's language in repelling it, and indeed we have to attribute atrocious conduct to them in order to understand how he could regard as justifiable all the strong expressions which he uses. This applies specially to xi. 13-15. See Menzies, *ad loc.*, and McFayden, pp. 247, 248."[5]

Galatians disclosed how Judaism would nullify the cross; compare 2:21, 5:2, 4, 6:12. Accordingly, 1 Corinthians 1:17 ff. strikes at the basic error in the heresy without delay, when Paul bears witness to the cross of Christ. Two related words loom up as crucial for the argument, σοφία and σοφός. Twenty-six times they are repeated in the opening chapters. James indicated a stress upon τέλειος, 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, upon παρουσία, and Galatians, upon νόμος. But the Corinthian Epistles dwell largely on wisdom and pride. Judaistic dogma may have proved alluring to Corinth, only because it fostered two characteristics of Greece.

1 Corinthians 1:17 declares that the cross epitomizes the whole gospel, while showing, also, how σοφία λόγον makes it void. In verses 18-23 the apostle relates the insignificance of Calvary for all the unsaved; then adds, in verses 24-31, what it means to Christians.

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[5] *2 Corinthians*, I. C. C., p. xxii.

Chapter 1 discusses grace and the depravity shown by man. After the crowning statement in 1:30-31, the second chapter advances to revelation of the means by which sinners may possess σοφία. 2:1-5 alludes to the experiences that Paul had at Corinth itself. The city was evangelized "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Only the divine Spirit can impart divine wisdom, according to verses 6-16. And He teaches none but Christians. Now, the Corinthians were really lacking in true wisdom, 3:1-4. Paul therefore unfolds the doctrine of reward and judgment for works, 3:5-23. Chapter 4 fittingly closes the apostolic warning against parties, since it voices one more personal testimony and plea.

Reference to a gnostic tendency for James was located in the contrast between true and false wisdom, 3:13-18, by some. Colossians also bears witness to the fact that gnostic teachers had offered σοφία.[6] Nowhere in the New Testament, however, does an author repeat the terms σοφία and σοφός as often as in 1 Corinthians. What can this signify for the Corinthians? Does it indicate a Judaic Gnosticism comparable to the Galatian heresy? Certainly, many expositors hesitate to link Corinth with gnostic thought, in spite of the likelihood that Gnostics had been promulgating their doctrines as early as James. Robertson and Plummer understand the false σοφία to be rhetorical cleverness--nothing more. Of course, they probably admit a similarity with Colossians, because πιθανολογία, Colossians 2:4, has been supplied as a cross reference to πιθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις, 1 Corinthians 2:4 (WH). Such a comparison one could not well overlook. In similar fashion Ellicott joins 1 Corinthians

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[6] Lightfoot.

1:30, "Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God" (A. S. V.), with Colossians 2:2-3, "Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It is generally believed that Paul is combatting an inborn desire for wisdom and philosophy, when he utters 1 Corinthians 1:17 ff. See Lightfoot particularly. But what connection will be secured with the first half of chapter 1, if we suppose that the writer turns aside to a general defence of the cross with verse 17? Instead of digressing from the error in party strife, which he mentioned earlier as a most serious offence, Paul is likely replying to this very fault now. Hence he has named the Jew (Judaizer) and the Greek (Corinthian), while developing his answer here. Σοφία, recall, may intimate the special approach to the Corinthians which the Judaizing band employed, recognizing fully the peculiar inclination manifest in Hellenism.

James had inculcated the truth of perfection. 1 Corinthians refers similarly to τέλειος thrice. Observe how the readers are informed about perfection in chapter 2. Paul classifies all of mankind, through whatever relationship they sustain to divine wisdom. 2:6 names the τέλειος, first of all. Doubtless they represent the πνευματικοί, 3:1, in contrast to the νήπιοι. Judging from the International Critical Commentary, the idea is certainly different from that of the Gnostics, who erected a strong barrier between the initiated (τέλειοι) and average Christians (ψυχικοί). But ψυχικοί are described in 2:14 as men that reject the Spirit. Romans 8:9, then, would distinctly separate them from the believers. "A strong barrier" must be raised between saved and unsaved, we know, if not between the spiritual and the carnal saints. A gnostic allusion for τέλειος becomes more likely, when chapters 1 and 2

of 1 Corinthians unite in answering the Judaistic forces and their σοφία. For a clear parallel with 1 Corinthians 2 and its deliverance on perfection, divine wisdom, and the Spirit, compare James 1:4-8. Kennedy holds that possibly there is an allusion in both σοφία and τέλειοι to arrogant claims made by adherents of the Apollos party. Alexandrian Judaism surely laid great emphasis on a superior knowledge (σοφία) which was the privilege of elect souls, bestowed by God. Note the evidence accumulated to prove such a connection with Egypt. The personified σοφία is represented as μύστις. . . .τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιστήμης (Wisd. viii. 4). Philo, in expounding certain Old Testament passages, speaks about "instructing in divine mysteries (τελετὰς. . . . θείας) the initiates (μύστας) who are worthy of such sacred mysteries" (De Cherub., 42). He himself has been μυηθεὶς τὰ μεγάλα μυστήρια (ibid., 49). It is likely that τέλειος belongs to this circle of mystery-ideas, especially if the Judaizers had come from Egypt. In the Hermetic literature, those who received the baptism of the divine νοῦς become τέλειοι. Only a τέλειος who has shared in the divine γνῶσις can make another τέλειος. Thereby arises the phrase λόγος τέλειος which is used as a title for one of the Hermetic documents--the revelation that initiates into the knowledge of God. Reitzenstein, from his famous researches into the Hermetic writings and its parallel in magical papyri and contemporary pagan mystery-cults, has concluded that Paul's various uses of πνεῦμα are all to be found in Hellenistic religious documents; that his antithesis between πνευματικός and ψυχικός was current before 1 Corinthians; that πνευματικός was a fixed religious conception in all the mystic faiths of paganism; and that νοῦς had already become an important religious term, the direct equivalent of

πνεῦμα.

> "It is in any case noteworthy that all the passages in Paul can be explained from Hellenistic usage (particularly those in which we cannot decide whether he is speaking of the πνεῦμα of man or of a Divine πνεῦμα, as, e. g. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5). Whether all may be as easily understood from the Hebrew use of ruach and nephesh, or from that of πνεῦμα in the LXX, the theologian must determine" (Reitzenstein).[7]

After investigating the terminology of 1 Corinthians 2, possibly no one will question the twofold dictum: incipient Gnosticism and the mystery religions are phenomena which overlap; this chaotic outgrowth of Hellenistic religion is our most faithful mirror of the prevailing syncretism of the period.[8]

Six other problems confronted the apostle in 1 Corinthians quite aside from division. None of them, however, suggests a Judaic Gnosticism as plainly as the first. In consequence we pass on from 1 Corinthians to 2 Corinthians. Chapters 10-13 in 2 Corinthians deal with Jewish heretics who were strongly opposing Paul's authority. Indeed, 2 Corinthians resumes the very discussion begun in 1 Corinthians, as 1 and 2 Thessalonians were unified.

The cognate words, καύχημα (thrice), καύχησις (six times), καυχᾶσθαι (twenty times) are more frequent in 2 Corinthians than in all the rest of the New Testament. Since this book is distinguished from all other apostolic writings through its sustained apologia for Paul, and the legalistic Judaizers are being refuted in the epistle, one would expect the writer to ring the changes on a word like glorying. As σοφία became the keynote of 1 Corinthians, καυχᾶσθαι may well serve as the

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[7] Quoted by Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions, p. 140.
[8] Kennedy.

crucial word in 2 Corinthians. Recall how James faced something akin to Judaic Gnosticism, which prided itself in character development. And James was followed by the Thessalonian letters, dwelling upon pride of knowledge. Similarly 2 Corinthians but forms a complement to 1 Corinthians, where Paul has inveighed against human wisdom. To all appearances, then, heresy manifests its working in social as well as personal ways, i. e., both in teaching and living. Compare Galatians with its strong emphasis upon νόμος.

One kind of glorying is quite legitimate for the Christian, namely, the truthful, 12:6 of 2 Corinthians. The Judaizers, however, indulged in another kind, 5:12. Since they gloried κατὰ τὴν σάρκα, 11:18, the apostle had to meet them on their own ground, before he could be sure of halting the influence being exerted. Yet even there Paul could glory, without once sacrificing the truth, 11:22 ff. Strangely enough, Pauline glorying concerns weakness, 11:30, 12:9b-10.

11:22 declares the equality of Paul and the heretics with respect to three particulars: Hebraic, Israelite, and Abrahamic descent. Compare Philippians 3:5, where two of the three are repeated (but in reverse order) with a later defence raised against a kindred false teaching. Here, as in the Philippian reference, Ἑβραῖος implies something which is not expressed in "Israelite." Though Baul was born in Tarsus, he nevertheless was brought up under a famous Hebrew teacher in the Hebrew metropolis, Acts 22:3; he spoke the Hebrew language fluently, Acts 22:2; he quotes frequently out of the Hebrew Scriptures, thus contrasting himself with his contemporaries: the Jewish Philo, and the Christian author of

the Epistle to the Hebrews, who commonly use the Hellenistic LXX.[9] In short, a man was not Ἑβραῖος unless he spoke the Hebrew tongue, and retained Hebrew customs. Israel, on the other hand, is the sacred name for the Jews as the nation of a theocracy. Notice Galatians 6:16. Thirdly, it was perhaps best of all to be of the seed of Abraham, to whom the original promises respecting the Messiah had been granted. Understood in this way, verse 22 leads on readily to διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν, verse 23.[10] Fausset observes a climax: Hebrew, connoting language and nationality; Israelite, descent from Israel (i. e., Jacob the prince who prevailed with God) and theocracy; Abraham's seed, peculiarly direct claim to a share in the Messiah promised of old (Rom. 9:4-5).

Verses 23-32 prove that the apostle's claim to be a minister of Christ is well founded, not that he excelled all the Judaizers through a richer ministry. Just as the four questions of verses 22-23 lead to a climax, so too the four ἐν phrases in verse 23, one expositor shows. The same interpreter continues:

> "Whether or no ἐν πληγαῖς is to be regarded as worse than ἐν κόποις and ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν θανάτοις is much worse than the other three. Then, just as the reply to the fourth question is developed in the clauses which follow, so the fourth clause here is explained and expanded in the sentences which follow. The rhythm and balance of clauses continues until the exceedingly matter-of-fact statement in vv. 32, 33 is reached, and it is impossible to discern how much of it is premeditated and how much due to the emotion of the moment. The substance of this vigorous assertion of his claim to be a minister of Christ must have been thought over beforehand, and perhaps the Apostle, knowing how important it was that this appeal should be successful, had also considered the form in which it should be presented."[11]

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[9] Lightfoot.

[10] Plummer.

[11] 2 Corinthians, I. C. C., p. 322.

Although some may believe that verses 32-33 form an anticlimax, there is good reason to believe that on the contrary they end a passionate rehearsal with one sober allusion to the beginning of a unique career. Thereby Paul can indicate that he has suffered trial and gracious deliverance from the outset of his ministry.[12]

In contrast to the afflicted missionary, his Judaistic critics gloried in appearance, ἐν προσώπῳ, 5:12. Chapter 10 unfolds the significance of this phrase. 10:1 commences by mentioning the presence (πρόσωπον) of Paul in Corinth. Seemingly a grave slander is under consideration, one uttered by the Judaizers. Then 10:7 makes the statement, Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε, during the course of Paul's reply to such an attack. From 10:12-18, consequently, we may learn the manner in which Judaic forces acted, so as to merit the charge of glorying ἐν προσώπῳ. No doubt 10:12 sums up the matter: it amounted to self-commendation. Compare the law-works taught in Galatia.

Chapter 12:1-10 bears an intimate relation with the preceding verses, yet introduces a new subject: ὀπτασίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις Κυρίου. 11:22 had specified the equality of Paul with his foes; 11:23-32, his true apostleship. Now revelatory visions are treated as a third and final moot question in any comparison between the apostle and the Judaizing party. 5:12-13 has alluded to the same subject.[13] One time Festus said impulsively that Paul was mad (Acts 26:24), and his Judaistic enemies leveled a similar charge (2 Cor. 11:1, 16), just as Jewish critics of our Lord had done in His case (Mk. 3:21, Jn. 7:48), Plummer

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[12] Harrison.

[13] *Ibid.*

shows. Remember 1 Corinthians 14:2, 18, 23 (I. C. C.). Since altogether ten verses in 2 Corinthians 12 are given over to the one point of visions, the apostle must have felt a strong need for impressing his readers. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:2, where a gnostic trend has already been noted in connection with supernatural revelation. That a similar eschatological heresy was being promulgated in Corinth appears from 1 Corinthians 15:12.

Syncretism distinguished the Corinthian error, as it has signalized Galatians. 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 reveal the lamentable state of affairs doctrinally. Outwardly the congregation subscribed to Christianity, 1 Corinthians 1:12; but inwardly it was being jeopardized by deceptive teaching, 2 Corinthians 4:2 ff. As in Galatia apparently, Galatians 5:19-21, the Corinthians likewise seem to have relaxed morality after the inflow of heresy, 2 Corinthians 12:21, 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:13 ff. After all, asceticism (i. e., Judaistic legalism) became the necessary consequence of gnostic theory, only to pass over itself by sure steps into antinomianism.[14] For the two opposite tendencies of life during the apostolic age, legalism and license, were both founded on the false dualism taught by Gnosticism.[15] Compare Philippians 3, where Jewish legalism and gnostic license are combatted in the same chapter by Paul, at a little later time.

Galatians disclosed a syncretistic leaven that was working in Asia Minor, colored especially with Judaism. Next, the Corinthian Epistles answer a Judaic syncretism with Hellenistic affinities. Moving westward from Jerusalem, a gnostic syncretism reaches as far as Rome. Paul's

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[14] Rutherfurd.
[15] Harrison.

Epistle to the Romans has raised a standard against its influx there.

Gnostics were the earliest theologians who attempted to construct a system out of the Pauline epistles. They found Romans, or to speak more definitely certain texts and ideas selected from the book (and generally misinterpreted),[16] very congenial. Furthermore, as might have been expected, the doctrine of election when rigidly interpreted harmonized with their own exclusive religious pretensions, and with the key word of their own system, φύσις. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that Romans 9, especially verse 14 ff., was one of their strongholds. Nor does one require to be told how they expounded the passage. See Origen, De. Princ., III ii 8; Tertullian, Adv. Marcion, ii 14 (I. C. C.).

Romans affected gnostic teaching. But did Gnosticism influence Romans? is our present inquiry. The major Pauline works, Sanday and Headlam explain, are all very largely concerned with the problem of circumcision, the Mosaic law, and the relations between Jewish and Gentile believers. Then, judging from what was disclosed in Galatians and the Corinthian letters, a student might look to Romans for evidence of similar heresy and apologetic. To be sure, in Romans, last of the four books composing the second New Testament series, Judaistic controversy has somewhat retired into the background, while other topics come to the fore. According to one exposition, here there are ideas for the apostle to treat concerned with the mediating agencies between God and man, which impair the central significance of Christ's person; and in addition, the multiplying of new churches with the growing organization

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[16] Such as Rom. 5:14, 8:19. Cf. Hippolytus, Ref., vii 25.

of intercommunication between those of older standing brings up the conception of the church as a unit, investing it with an impressiveness.

Admittedly Romans is the most elaborate and glowing letter from the apostle's pen. With matchless Pauline style it presents New Testament soteriology. Whereas νόμος characterized the testimony of Galatians, δικαιοσύνη may fittingly distinguish Romans. Δικαιοσύνη itself occurs more than thirty times, and the root from which it is derived, another thirty times throughout the epistle. Paul did not rest content with the witness he had borne to the Galatians with respect to law and grace. For Romans amplifies his earlier statement, as the missionary makes ready for evangelizing in the West, 15:15 ff., 1:15-17.

Anz has esteemed soteriology the central tenet of Gnosticism, chapter 1 observed. So if any conflict with gnostic power is to be seen in Romans, the doctrine of salvation will likely reveal this. Three truths are developed by Romans concerning δικαιοσύνη: the universal absence of it, 1:18-3:20; the divine bestowal, 3:21-28; the manifold implications, 4:1-16:27 (what remains of the book).

3:19-20 summarizes the revelation contained in the first truth being taught. It amounts to a solemn, all-inclusive indictment upon man:

> "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin" (A. S. V.).

Jew and Gentile alike are condemned by the law. Apparently no reference is made to the Judaizer. And yet does not the writer silence Judaism of the heretical sort, whenever he proves that Old Testament law will not avail for salvation? From study in Galatians it became clear that

Judaic heretics did not reject Christ altogether, while enforcing law as the way to justification. But law observance meant occupation solely with works and rules, not at all with the Savior. By removing the possibility of self justification, therefore, Paul has answered the heresy. That no definite allusion was made to Judaistic doctrine can be explained from the fact that Judaizers confused believers about their sanctification, more than their actual justification from the penalty of sin. Besides, Judaizing notions do not seem as yet to have infected Rome.[17] The apostle, then, need only forearm the church, rather than censure and stigmatize.

The divine bestowing of righteousness indicates: a new age, 3:21; appropriation by faith, 3:22; universal depravity, 3:23; divine grace, 3:24; just provision for the pre-cross sins, 3:25; God uncomplicated with sin, 3:26; exclusion of merit, 3:27-28; equal opportunity for Jew and Gentile, 3:29-30; establishment of law, 3:31. Again the Judaizer is not mentioned directly, while Paul sets forth his argument. More than a shadowy reference to heresy, as well as to the covenant nation, however, may arise from the repeated use of one important word, νόμος, especially in the phrase νόμος πίστεως, verse 27. Compare verse 31. A faith principle, the author maintains, is not something vain. On the contrary, it will rise to the heights of establishing law. Verses 29-30, further, refute the Jewish exclusiveness which Judaizers wanted to foster. Note the boldness of Paul in specifying the very terms used in Judaistic controversy, περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία (verse 30). Judaizers overlooked Christ, both His person and work. How vastly different is the emphasis

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[17] Gloag.

in verses 21-31! Doubtless the opening words of verse 27 will sum up the apostolic testimony against heretical Judaism: Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις; ἐξεκλείσθη.

Manifold are the implications to spring from the justifying work of God. Not every one relates to Judaism and its effect upon Romans, of course. But the chief questions concerned with this position seem obvious enough. For example, chapter 4 defends the truth relative to Gentile salvation. As in Galatians, Paul once more goes back to Abraham, the father of Israel, in order to prove that justification comes through faith. (James too had spoken of the patriarch, 2:21ff.) Romans presents more detail than Galatians and James. Then chapter 5 in Romans treats of sin, particularly from verse 12. While the Judaizer admitted the fact that man sinned and therefore needed deliverance, his system inculcated doctrine which is opposed to 5:12 ff. Judaism taught that a man could work out his own salvation by doing, that is to say, through obedience to law so as to accumulate merit, Galatians 3:11. Regeneration was not demanded, nor an enabling by the Spirit. A statement like Romans 5:6, or 5:12, ill accorded with Judaistic thought. Next, chapter 6 of Romans outlines the Pauline reply to a charge of antinomianism, which was voiced by a Jew (Judaizer, perhaps). Compare 3:8. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," Paul declares, grace can perform. So far from antinomianism, then, does Christianity lie, that faithful believers may be styled: "servants of righteousness" (verse 18), "servants to righteousness" (verse 19), "servants to God" (verse 22).

Just as Galatians had stressed faith and empowering by the Holy Spirit, Romans lays emphasis upon the operation of the Third Person in

a yielded Christian. Agreeing with 1 Corinthians 12:13 that all converts possess the Spirit, though only some are πνευματικοί, 1 Corinthians 3:1, Romans also witnesses to the Spirit's indwelling every believer, 8:9, but adds that "the power" of the Paraclete should become something for which to pray, 15:13.

Commentators have expressed surprise at a vehement outburst like 16:17-20, since it was kept for the end of a letter almost destitute of any direct controversy. Such a word, however, only substantiates the apologetic interpretation that we have assigned Romans. With others Voigt decides:

> "It has rightly been inferred that the reference is to the Jewish-Christian fanatics, who were everywhere breaking into Gentile churches to bring them over to the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law."[18]

Heresy may not have reached as far west as Rome by this time. Yet the apostle knows through experience that a church must be prepared for its onslaught. Latinism, no more than Hellenism, could stave off a subtle attack from the enemy, when disguised as a syncretic religion would be--chameleon-like, suited thus to the new environment. Therefore the Spirit of God designed to preserve the church by guiding Paul to write the needful testimony against heretical doctrine. The major Pauline epistles contain full proof of the error broadcast by Judaism, or Jewish Gnosticism.

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[18] *New Testament Commentary*, *in loc*.

Chapter VI

MATTHEW AND LUKE WITNESS AGAINST GNOSTICISM

The first and the third Gospels may provide another series in New Testament literature. Any dating of the Gospels, however, is fraught with difficulty. So much debate has arisen over both major and minor points in the evidence, that one hesitates to touch upon the subject. Zahn affirms that "endless strife is possible." Since we nevertheless are investigating the effect of gnostic doctrine upon all the apostolic writings, it behooves us to trace the heresy from book to book chronologically, in so far as possible. According to the oldest tradition concerned with Gospel origins, a trustworthy guide in some matters related to the Evangelists, Matthew was produced first. This chronology dates the book between 61 and 66 A. D. With others, the present writer inclines toward such a date, if not to one a few years earlier. The same tradition places Mark immediately after Matthew. But other tradition of real value seems to make the third Gospel precede Mark. Perhaps the later testimony should be accepted, since numerous scholars agree with its contents. Certainly, the second and third Gospels may alike belong to the seventh decade. Chapter X, then, will scrutinize Mark, while Matthew and Luke are examined here.

Like every portion of Scripture, Matthew conveys a distinctive message. The impression which this book desires to enforce, Plummer believes, is that of Messiah's sovereignty. Allen finds three aspects of the Messianic work being represented in Matthew: the task of healing

and preaching, which formed a sort of preparation for the coming kingdom; the reappearance at the end of the age, when Messiah will come again to inaugurate His kingdom; the death of Messiah, which is, from one point of view, a necessary stage in the development of the divine purpose. That granted, the root βασιλεύω may furnish the key word for the first Gospel. More than any other Gospel, Matthew emphasizes the royal office which Christ possesses.

Different sects exhibit the varied development of the several elements that were recognized, and united by the apostolic church in its teaching. Recall 1 Corinthians 1:12. One group, the Nazarenes, was content to cherish the ancient law of Israel with natural reverence and pride; but another, the Ebionites, insisted on the universal reception of the Mosaic ritual. All these Judaizing sectaries saw in Christ nothing but the human Messiah, co-ordinate with Adam and Moses;[1] and in the Christian faith, nothing but the perfection of Judaism,[2] whether they regarded this from the practical (Ebionites proper) or mystical point of view (gnostic Ebionites[3]), Westcott avers. Paul was assuredly "their enemy," and the universal gospel which he preached "a lawless and idle doctrine."[4] By the common consent of early witnesses, the various parties originating from the embodiment of Judaistic principles are known to have accepted the "Gospel" of Matthew as the basis of their evangelic record. Matthew, therefore, did appeal to certain Gnostics. But the

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[1] Clem. Hom. III 21 (Adam), II 38 (Moses). Cf. Hom. III 20, XVIII 13.

[2] Either as identifying Christianity with the real essence of Judaism (Hom.), or as recognizing in Judaism the preparation for Christianity (Recogn.).

[3] On the twofold distinction in their Christology see Eus. H. E. III 27, VI 17; Epiph. Haer. XXX 16.

[4] Ep. Petri. (Hom.) c. 2; XVII 19.

question for consideration now must be: Did Gnosticism color Matthew (because it contains a unique witness to Christ)?

Colossians reveals that gnostic teachers erred in the realm of Theology Proper. Compare Colossians 2:18 ff. In an extreme form, or one carried to its final conclusion, this sort of doctrine robbed God of personality. Chapter I discussed the fact that such a theology rests basically upon dualism, the Oriental dualism of good and evil which deems matter wholly evil. Since Matthew concerns chiefly the kingdom of God and His Son, its ruler, and Gnosticism inculcates a false Theology Proper, whatever thought of gnostic cast to be found in the Gospel, if any, will doubtless relate to Christ and the kingdom.

The first Gospel can divide into three main sections, each one embracing an aspect of the Messianic work: Christ healing and preaching, chapters 4-23; prophesying about the Second Advent, chapters 24-25; dying and rising, chapters 26-28. Part one includes most of the book. Chapters 1-2 sketch the genealogy, birth, and childhood of Messiah. His genealogy proves that He could justly claim the Davidic throne through human kinship, while the supernatural birth indicates that He could claim it through divine relationship. Even as an infant, royal honors were paid Christ. But a Satanic onslaught made it necessary to remove the baby from Palestine for a time, and later to rear Him in Nazareth. Scripture wisely remains silent about the early years, except for a few essential details. Consequently gnostic dogma has not been opposed in direct fashion, it seems. Plummer however judges that an allusion comes into view, when the baptism occurs, chapter 3. In the Ebionite Gospel quoted by Epiphanius (Haer. XXX 13), the dove

is described as entering into (εἰς) Christ. Compare Mark 1:10; contrast Luke 3:22. Apparently Messiah was taken to be devoid of the Spirit until baptism, or the gift of the Spirit was understood to have made a change in His nature. Some Gnostics imagined that the descent of the Spirit then was the moment of incarnation; and that, until baptism, Christ was a mere man, the sòn of Joseph and Mary. Εἰς αὐτόν (Mark) might seem to imply that previously there had been a void in Him. Matthew and Luke, of course, clarify the meaning. Docetic Christology does not enter largely into New Testament apologetic, until a later date. Yet Matthew 3:16 perhaps will foreshadow the future tenet in Gnosticism. Compare page 399, Plummer.

3:2 mentions the kingdom of Christ, David's Son begotten by the Spirit. Matthew alone employs this expression: ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. Here it appears in the preaching of John, Messiah's herald. More than thirty times the phrase is used by the Evangelist. Might it not have peculiar significance for kingdom doctrine in the first Gospel, and possibly pertain to Jewish Gnosticism? Several times Matthew employs the words, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, too; but not nearly as often as Mark and Luke. Other variants in Matthew are: ἡ βασιλεία, ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ, ἡ βασιλεία σου, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐτῶν, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρός μου. None of them comes frequently. The first of them is also peculiar to Matthew. It sounds almost like our colloquial way of speaking about "the kingdom."[5]

Throughout the remainder of our New Testament, "the kingdom of God" is the common designation for God's rule, Vos observes. So the

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[5] Vos.

question ought to be considered with care: What does this special name, "the kingdom of the heavens," signify? The genitive, τῶν οὐρανῶν, has been explained as one of origin or quality, so as to mark off God's dominion from all earthly powers. But, replies an expositor, such a thought was so obvious in itself, that it needed no particular emphasis, unless there should have been a definite historical occasion to suggest the special reminder. B. Weiss assumes that there actually was a case, in as much as through the destruction of Jerusalem the expectation hitherto cherished, that the center of the coming kingdom would be in Palestine, had become untenable; and the inference therefore drawn, that henceforth the center would have to be located in heaven. Unfulfilled prophecy from the Old Testament will refute a construction like that of Weiss. Schürer, Vos, *et al*. maintain that the Jewish custom of using the word "heaven" from among the substitutes for the divine name, which were chosen out of superstitious reverence, will account for the phenomenon in Matthew, Jewish gospel that it is. Their reasoned argument, however, lacks power to convince. Perhaps the chief criticism against their position springs from the fact that the two leading expressions, "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of heaven," differ in connotation; hence are not synonymous. Allen, for example, points out that the latter means the kingdom which Christ announced as at hand, to be inaugurated when the Son of man returns on the clouds. By so much it would deserve being called a "Jewish" phrase, or a strictly eschatological and Messianic expression. Another scholar cautions against referring the phraseology entirely to the future. It may signify immediate times, 11:12, and the whole present era, 13:24,

besides the eschatological kingdom, 7:21.[6]

How then must "the kingdom of heaven" be distinguished from "the kingdom of God"? This problem merits detailed study, because it will furnish the most likely clue in tracing gnostic thought back to Matthew. 3:2, the first reference in Matthew, embodies the message of John, Messiah's herald. No parallel passage with a kindred expression will be discovered, although Mark and Luke also mention the Baptist. Thus the Evangelist indicates from the very beginning that he links "the kingdom of the heavens" with Messiah and His sway. Mark 1:15 harmonizes with 4:17, the second verse in Matthew. ῾Η βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, of course, was used by the second Evangelist. That the two phrases can be employed interchangeably at times is evident on the surface, since both specify a divine sovereignty. Yet the question still remains unsettled: Do they signify the same entity? Is not the one more inclusive than the other? The one specifically Messianic and prophetic, and in consequence an apology opposed to Judaic Gnosticism?

5:3 runs parallel with Luke 6:20, where "the kingdom of God" is written. Both expressions, then, can be joined with the poor in spirit, as both could designate the Messianic kingdom. The persecuted, 5:10 tells, also possess the kingdom of heaven. No parallel phrase will be noticed in another Gospel. Similarly the two uses in 5:19 have no strict parallel, where the kingdom is connected with a foregoing experience under law. Furthermore, 5:20 speaks of the legal requirement for entrance into the kingdom, without there being a similar verse elsewhere. 7:21 lays

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[6] Harrison.

down the precise requirement for entering the kingdom. Compare Luke 6:46 (not similar in all respects). Likewise 8:11 and Luke 7:1 ff. hardly coincide.[7] Matthew alludes here to the many Gentiles who will participate in the kingdom to come, along with Jews, while some descendants of Abraham are rejected. 10:7 harmonizes with Luke 9:2, another case in which "the kingdom of God" is employed with regard to the Messianic cause. 11:11 and Luke 7:28 alike point out the future kingdom. But 11:12 finds no real parallel in the other Gospels, as it reveals that actual violence was being done to the kingdom then and there. Nevertheless compare Luke 7:30, 16:16.

13:11 coincides for the most part with Mark 4:11 and Luke 8:10, where they use "the kingdom of God." It concerns disclosure of the kingdom mysteries (or mystery, Mark 4) only to disciples. 13:24, however, is unique among the Gospels, heading as it does the parable of the wheat and tares. Again, 13:31 proceeds with Mark 4:30; compare Luke 13:18, spoken at a later time apparently. Both the Mark and Luke passages contain "the kingdom of God" terminology, while relating the same parable, namely, the mustard seed illustration. 13:33 is co-ordinate with Luke 13:20 (note "the kingdom of God" once more). It recounts the leaven parable. The hid treasure story is preserved only by 13:44, along with that of the pearl, 13:45, and of the net, 13:47. Also, 13:52 stands by itself. This verse links the scribe who is instructed in kingdom truth together with a householder.

16:19 is not paralleled elsewhere. Christ delivers to Peter the keys of the kingdom. But 18:1 exhibits similarity with Mark 9:33 ff.

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[7] See Luke 13:28-29.

and Luke 9:46 ff. So does 18:3,[8] and 18:4. Here the Messiah teaches humility. 18:23 stands alone, while inculcating forgiveness; likewise 19:12, on celibacy. 19:14 is duplicated by Mark 10:14 and Luke 18:16 with "the kingdom of God." It connects little children and God's kingdom. 19:23, Mark 10:23, and Luke 18:24 (with "the kingdom of God" phrase) connect the rich man and it, too. 20:1, again, is not co-ordinated.[9] This verse tells the story of a householder seeking workmen. And 22:2 has no parallel, when it unfolds the narrative of a king and his rejected invitation.[10] 23:13 calls to mind two verses, Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47, 11:52, itself a condemnation for hypocritical leaders. Finally, 25:1 must be accounted unique. Its words introduce the parable of ten virgins.

Beyond question the two kingdoms seem identical in all major respects. Both signify a divine rule over earth, a Messianic dominion, the same prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom (conversion, that is), an antagonism with the world system and victory over it in the future. The present writer nevertheless takes a stand with Allen, when he distinguishes the kingdom of heaven as strictly Messianic. Ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, on the other hand, designates what belongs strictly to God the Father. Father and Son are alike related to an earthly dominion promised to David, as First and Second Persons in the Godhead.[11] But Scripture views the kingdom from both angles, one time from the former, another time from the latter. Ὁ θεός, to be sure, may specify the Son occasionally. More often, however, it means the First Person. And with

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[8] Cf. Luke 18:17.

[9] Cf. Luke 13:29 with Matt. 20:16.

[10] Cf. Luke 14:15 ff.

[11] Cf. Eph. 5:5; Rev. 11:15.

the phrase in question, it always looks like a reference to God the Father. From the derivation of "the kingdom of heaven" support is lent to our reasoning. This phrase has been traced back to Daniel 2:37, 44, 7:14. Although the actual wording will not be noted there, yet it trembles on the verge of utterance, since it is being told that God's kingdom will supplant man's, and He will give it to כבר אנש, Daniel 7:13.[12] In a sense, then, the kingdom is mediatorial, 1 Corinthians 15:24 ff., John 18:36; while at the same time it originates in God the Father, 1 Corinthians 3:23. Everything considered, the two kingdoms upon our interpretation possess the same scope throughout the New Testament. They connote one entity, namely, God's dominion upon earth.

Perhaps the possibility of an exegesis like the above will not be denied. But some may inquire: What confirmation does it gain from usage in Matthew? The first Gospel manifestly attempts to exalt Christ as the King of Kings. This one phrase for the kingdom served the purpose in admirable fashion. When the kingdom is first named by Matthew, ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is employed. And no other phraseology has been used as frequently in the book as "the kingdom of heaven." Only Matthew, for instance, mentions an act like Christ's giving the keys which belong to the kingdom, 16:19; selling ὅσα ἔχει, in order to gain hidden treasure, 13:44; or a precious pearl, 13:46. Then notice 13:41 and 16:28, where Christ is directly credited with the kingdom. Compare 20:21. Other Gospels do not convey an equal emphasis. If 13:41 is joined closely with 13:24, it appears likely that "the kingdom of heaven" must be equated with

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[12] Harrison.

Messiah's power.

Indeed, the most convincing evidence for our exegesis may arise from a gnostic background. According to Colossians, the Gnostic construed matter as evil; God as distant from an earth that was composed of matter; Christ as a mediator between earth and heaven, but not divine. Jewish Gnosticism in the major Pauline epistles had also depreciated Christ. By the time Matthew was written, however, a more positive sign of the heresy may have been forthcoming. Certainly it was so, when Paul wrote the Prison Epistles about this time. Why has the first Evangelist dwelt upon "heaven" more than any other writer of the New Testament, if not for apologetic reasons? He shows how the heavens can bow down and help. Christ was born through direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, God the Third Person. The earthly kingdom promised to David was none other than "the kingdom of heaven." And the divine sovereignty known as the Davidic kingdom is being exercised in Matthew by the Spirit-begotten Messiah. Scripture never feels an antagonism between heaven and earth, as if the latter were incapable of receiving bliss through a millennial age, or such an event were incompatible with heaven's rule. So Christ Himself offers the heavenly kingdom to Israel. The theanthropic mediator in His work of establishing a kingdom refutes dualism. No one questions thereby the fact that Jews expected an earthly rule under Messiah. But we should consider that they did not look for a *God*-man to be their sovereign. Both the Father and the Son are linked with heaven by Matthew, as the first Gospel emphasizes a gracious intervention from above. Ὁ πατὴρ ὁ οὐράνιος occurs seven times, for example, and nowhere else. This phrase is closely akin to ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, which appears thirteen times (elsewhere only Mark 11:25). Likewise

Matthew furnishes more of Christ's sayings with regard to angels than any other Gospel.[13] If the gnostic allusion in Matthew seems indefinite, perhaps the reference of Luke will give weight to our construction.

Luke rehearses the life of Christ with a different ruling-thought than Matthew. The first Gospel was written by a Jew and primarily for Jews; but the third Gospel, doubtless by a Gentile and for Gentiles. Matthew placed emphasis upon the divine sovereignty exercised by Christ. Luke is characterized by stress on the Mediator's humanity or incarnation. Now the Messiah appears as God-man. Various indications of the Lucan viewpoint have been tabulated: concern for all mankind and for woman, prayer, holiness. Perhaps the last point is the most significant for our investigation here, particularly Luke's repetition of the phrase "Holy Spirit." Whereas Matthew alluded to the Holy Spirit five times, Mark, four, and John, three, Luke mentions the Third Person thus twelve times altogether, each time linking Him with Christ. Similarly Luke furnishes seven other facts about holiness, which relate to Messiah. In all, Matthew contains thirteen references to holiness, Mark, seven, John, nine, and Luke, twenty-one.

What influence did Luke exert upon Gnosticism? The Clementine Homilies manifest likenesses to the third Gospel, which are probably allusions. Luke was known to Basilides and Valentinus. Heracleon commented on it, while Marcion adopted it as the basis for what he has called the "Gospel of the Lord" or "Gospel of Christ." Marcion, however, omitted much from the book, since it looked inconsistent with his teaching (apparently he added nothing). For the most part, scholars admit

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[13] Plummer.

that the one fragment of the Gospel of Peter, still extant, suffices to prove an acquaintance with Luke. Gnostics usually assert that the Gospels in their common form do not embrace the full truth about Messiah; therefore, without knowledge of the secret tradition that a Gnostic cherishes, the Gospel records, which are contradictory in many ways, cannot be correctly understood.

Gnosticism, it was shown earlier by citing Colossians, deemed matter evil; and then had to separate God from His universe by a chain of emanations, every one the less affected by material elements, as it arrived nearer deity. God was ultimately deprived of personality through this sort of speculation. Matthew replied to the heresy by means of stress upon Christ as divine sovereign of an earthly kingdom, so as to demonstrate the fallacy of dualism. If Matthew answered the gnostic Theology Proper by speaking of the earth and Christ's divine work thereon, Luke may frame a reply to the same doctrine, because it dwells upon the holiness of Messiah's person, as God become incarnate in the second member of the Godhead, and living in the world a true man among men. Exegesis of all twenty-one verses on holiness, beginning with the twelve pertaining to the Holy Spirit, will follow, that the student may observe with what justice, if any, Luke has been connected with gnostic teaching.

Only Luke records the promise that the forerunner of Messiah would be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, 1:15. Matthew, Mark, and John introduce the Baptist without describing his background in the least. All the Gospels carefully guard the conception of Christ, as the work of God the Spirit. But Luke alone has reported the care with which God prepared the Messianic herald. It would have been sufficient, one might

think, for John to become a fit tool in the Spirit's hand, after commencing his remarkable ministry. According to Luke, the Spirit did not wait longer than birth, much less till maturity and the time of lifework, in order to come upon the Baptist. Notice that John was filled, constantly filled, when set apart from the womb for the ministry of Messianic proclamation. Others, like his father Zacharias or his mother Elisabeth, experienced but the temporary filling with the Holy Spirit. This unique possession which John knew accords well with the accompanying factors revealed in 1:15: his greatness before the Lord, and his Nazarite character. The one feature is announced by Christ Himself, when He declared: "I say unto you, Among them that are born of woman there is none greater than John" (7:28, A. S. V.). Evidently the Holy Spirit operated in John's life with highest regard for sanctification, in as much as the Baptist would serve Christ as forerunner. All the angelic message concerning John should be pondered here, 1:13 ff.

1:35 harmonizes with Matthew 1:18, 20. Mary's conception is explained as nothing less than the intervening of God the Holy Spirit. Luke supplies more detail than Matthew (the other Gospels do not recount the virgin birth). While Matthew narrates the event from the standpoint of Joseph, Luke has viewed it from that of Mary. By so much the peculiar emphasis upon holiness is being continued in this, a second allusion to the Holy Spirit. For the intimate conversation between Gabriel and Mary has been repeated by Luke, as the angel previously had addressed Zacharias at some length, 1:13 ff.

Luke unfolds next the amazing encounter between the two women, Mary and Elisabeth, prior to their confinement, 1:41. Marvelous blessing that

Elisabeth had received, she nevertheless appreciated the superior distinction that Mary gained from the Lord. No other Gospel includes this miraculous recognition of Mary. (Cf. Matt. 1:20 again, where Joseph was enlightened on the same subject by an angel.) It is improbable, Plummer believes, that in her salutation Mary had told Elisabeth of the angel's visit to Nazareth. On the contrary, Mary's greeting alone so influenced the unborn child within Elisabeth, as to lead her, or rather to have the Holy Spirit lead her, to bless the future mother of Christ. Elisabeth was filled with the Spirit, that she might interpret the unusual sign aright. Notice her full statement, 1:42-45, and the Magnificat with which the other responded, 1:46ff. Matthew 1:20 looks less impressive than the emphatic recital by Luke. Truly, how holy is the ground on which we stand, here at the threshold of divine incarnation! The third Gospel aims to enforce the fact upon every reader, else it would not specify the varied details of holiness, which surround the infinite condescension of God, when He Himself appeared on earth as the promised Messiah.

1:67 affirms that the Benedictus of Zacharias, as well as the Εὐλογημένη of Elisabeth, originated in the Holy Spirit. It was not enough for Luke to point out the spiritual in-filling of the Forerunner, the conception for Mary, and the due acknowledgment thereof, by the Holy Spirit. His incarnation recital maintains its high level of significance, when he refers to the prophesying which John's birth evoked. Προφητεύω is the constant word in the New Testament to express outspeaking by the very Spirit of God.[14] Since John's birth marked the first step in the

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[14] Trench.

outworking of Incarnation, the Holy Spirit was pleased to signalize it with this demonstration. For the moment Zacharias, a priest from the course of Abijah (1:5), exercised the prophetic gift like his illustrious son. The mother of John had been filled by the Holy Spirit for the sake of testimony to Christ the incarnate Lord (1:43); now the father, too, 1:68 ff.

At circumcision John was heralded by his own father through a ministry of the Holy Spirit. Likewise the infant Messiah received a welcome after forty days, at the hands of Simeon in Jerusalem, 2:25 ff.[15] From beginning to end of the Infancy Gospel, Luke 1:5-2:40 strictly, Luke has recorded the Holy Spirit's operation. Here He gives divine admonition to a representative from the Israelite remnant, which had been awaiting Christ through the centuries, 2:26. No date was named by the Spirit, when He approached Simeon. But a promise was made, that he would see the Lord's Anointed before dying. Malachi 3:1 comes to mind, as Simeon discovers Messiah in the temple. Recall that Simeon uttered his heartfelt praise by means of the Nunc Dimittis, 2:29 ff. Compare 2:34-35.

3:16 is paralleled by Matthew 3:11 and Mark 1:8, similar to the harmony between Luke and Matthew on the vital subject of Mary's conception. Luke has set forth more detail about John and his ministry, than the other Evangelists. Thus he carries farther the extended narrative already written with respect to John's origin. Lucan appreciation for the magnitude of the crisis occurring when John arose is displayed by the sixfold attempt to give it an exact date, 3:1-2. It was with a similar

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[15] The separation of ἅγιον from πνεῦμα in 2:25 accentuates the difference between this expression and "Holy Spirit" (I. C. C.).

wish to do justice to a critical time that Thucydides gave a sixfold date to the entry of the Thebans into Plataea, by which the Peloponnesian War began (I. C. C.). Impressive and influential as the Prophet Herald grew, however, by an unsolicited confession, or rather testimony, he connected his baptism merely with water, and Christ's with the Holy Spirit and fire. Thus the Forerunner proclaims the holiness of Messianic work.

When John baptized the Messiah, the ceremony was distinguished from all other Johannine baptism by anointing from above, 3:22. The Spirit descended upon Christ like a dove, for one thing. But whereas Matthew writes πνεῦμα θεοῦ, and Mark, τὸ πνεῦμα, Luke stresses holiness with τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. This full phraseology appears twice besides, 2:26 and 10:21. In all, Luke expresses "Holy Spirit" three ways: πνεῦμα ἅγιον, seven times; τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, thrice; and τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον, twice.[16] So far as we know, the Messiah and John met only upon this solemn occasion. Observe, then, how the relative and the absolute holiness of both men is sharply differentiated. Evidently Christ did not need John's repentance baptism, as did others.

Like 3:22, 4:1 stands unique in the Gospels by reason of its specifying the Holy Spirit. Compare Matthew 4:1, Mark 1:12. Observe Luke's peculiar emphasis, also, when he uses the adjective πλήρης. Indeed, the third Gospel mentions the Spirit twice in 4:1, the first time with reference to Messiah's subjective state, and the second time with regard to His being led (imperfect tense) by the Third Person. This Evangelist

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[16] Plummer.

could not have guarded the holiness of the scene more closely than he has done. To climax his emphasis, he concludes the Temptation narrative, and begins the succeeding episode, with another verse on the Spirit, 4:14. Matthew and Mark have not.

Nowhere else is anything like 10:21 recorded of Christ, according to the I. C. C. Ἠγαλλιάσατο is a strong expression. Compare 1:47, Acts 2:26, 16:34, Isaiah 25:9. Plummer comments that the fact is analogous to Messiah's being led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 4:1 (see the A. S. V. margin). The very strangeness of this phrase has brought about the omission of τῷ ἁγίῳ by A Syr-Sin. and some inferior authorities. Surely Luke desires to picture the true feeling of Christ, after the seventy return with joyful elation. Were He but a man, like the disciples, He would be as flushed with success as they. However, the God-man turns immediately to His Father, that He might give vent to praise. By the *Holy* Spirit, therefore, He conducted Himself in the hour of triumph, perfectly free from self exaltation. Victory never affected Him harmfully, any more than rejection discouraged or terrified His soul.

11:13, too, has no strict parallel in the other Gospels. Matthew comes the nearest, but does not name the Spirit. Not only is the Holy Spirit empowering Messiah, but also He will be bestowed on those who ask the Father for Him, Christ reveals. The Third Person can sanctify any child of God, not alone God incarnate in Messiah. What stupendous truth! It seemed amazing that God the Son could assume flesh and enter the human race. Yet the Mediator now promises that the Spirit is also free to work with man. This wonderful declaration will account for the ten-day prayer that culminated in Pentecost, Acts 1:14, 2:1 ff.

When such an important theme as the unpardonable sin is declared by

the Gospels, one would expect all the Synoptic records to harmonize, even to the addition of ἅγιον with πνεῦμα. And thus it happens. 12:10 is co-ordinate with Matthew 12:32 and Mark 3:29. Yet Luke's narrative lends a distinctive emphasis to the subject, it seems. Whereas Matthew and Mark join this warning against sin to the charge that Messiah co-operated with βεεζεβούλ, the third Gospel links it with a Messianic exhortation to confessing the Son of man. That is to say, the unpardonable sin has been connected not alone with Christ and His holy ministry, but also with the disciples and their pure testimony. Notice 12:12, where again the very same phraseology is found: τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. (The other Gospels are silent here.) If the witness of disciples be rejected, and they testify through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, it apparently amounts to the same sin as that of deliberately blaspheming Christ's work, which was performed through God the Spirit. Certainly an appalling climax is reached in the final Lucan reference to the Spirit, no matter how chapter 12 be interpreted.

The remaining uses of the adjective ἅγιον look no less significant than the twelve already discussed. Five cluster around the Gospel of the Infancy (a feature in Luke alone), just as do the first five belonging to the previous series. If only the incarnation could be established as holy beyond all doubt or controversy, the rest of Christ's relationship to the world might the easier be proved above complication with sin. 1:35, emphatically enough, heads this new list of usages. It points to the Christ child who was given to Mary, the unborn infant being called holy as free from all taint of sin. Διό, the strongest inferential

conjunction that Greek employs and rare in the Gospels,[17] introduces the clause containing ἅγιον. In the prior statement, from which the inference is drawn, most impressive words stand: δύναμις Ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι. Herein is intimated the idea of the Shechinah, that symbolized divine presence and power from early times. Compare 9:34.

Not only is the unborn Messiah described as holy, but Mary bears testimony that the Lord God Who provided Christ owns a holy name, also, 1:49. Psalm 111:9 has been quoted by the framer of the Magnificat. Sin characterizes neither Father nor Son; never did and never will. God blesses sinners, yet not once at the expense of infinite holiness. Mary, a sinner herself, knew this, when she rejoiced in God her personal Savior, 1:47. See 11:2, a parallel verse.

Furthermore, 1:70 discloses that God predicted in ancient time the coming of the God-man, using holy prophets to do it from generation to generation. Not even the human messengers who carried His promise could be complicated with sin in the performance of duty. Absolutely at every point the holiness of salvation and its Agent is being protected. After evidence like this accumulates, the Old Testament refrain begins ringing in our ears: "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Zacharias proceeds in his Benedictus by affirming the holiness of the covenant itself, 1:72. Ἁγίας was not quoted, although most words in the verse possess an Old Testament background. It is not hard to appreciate the sacred character of an unconditional agreement, like the

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[17] Plummer.

Abrahamic covenant in this case. Compare Psalm 106:45, Leviticus 26:42 (I. C. C.). Nevertheless, Luke alone is the one to enforce the truth. Might it not suggest an apologetic stress, as well as historical fullness in his report?

2:23 concludes the reference to holiness embraced within the Infancy Gospel. It apparently reaches a new height in revelation, since the Evangelist quotes the law that Messiah's parents fulfilled after His miraculous conception and birth. This Old Testament provision (Ex. 13:12) called for the sanctifying of the first-born. As a first-born male, Christ too needed redemption from the claim of God. If the first-born of man and beast were counted holy to the Lord, and here the little Messiah is recognized as such, the incarnation must not have resulted in a blemish for Him. For now God was ready to accept Him along with other first-born.

Marcion commenced his mutilated edition of Luke at 4:31, significant to note. The earlier portion, which teaches Messiah's spotless humanity in particular, he omitted, excepting the first clause of 3:1.[18] But even 4:34 should have impressed him as an indication of Christ's theanthropic nature. Ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ occurs in the parallel verse, Mark 1:24, and in John 6:69; nowhere else. As Luke rehearses the first miracle performed by Christ, an undoubted representative of evil must confess His unique holiness, rather than malign. 4:34 begins with Ἔα (not in Mark), an interjection amounting here to "a diabolical screech"[19] and "horror" (I. C. C.).

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[18] Plummer.

[19] Robertson.

Last of all, 9:26 mentions the holy angels, because they will accompany Christ at the parousia. Holy though the angels may be, Messiah does not feel any less sanctified, when He is making this declaration. Indeed, He links together the glory of the Father with both Himself and the angelic hosts. First comes notice of Himself, then of the Father, and finally of the angels. At His Second Advent, He will be manifested in the possession of glory belonging to Himself, the Father, and the holy angels. What greater statement of Messianic holiness could the Evangelist have framed? Compare Matthew 16:27 ("holy" not employed) and Mark 8:38 (nothing about the special glory of Messiah). Throughout the Gospels, Plummer believes, it is in the records of Christ's sayings, that the closest resemblance is found.

Colossians did not name any heretic, although a ruinous dogma was being circulated by Gnostic teachers. As a general rule, the New Testament apologies never have specified opponents by name. It cannot signify that they belittle the danger involved, since the apologetic emphasis is too unmistakable to be overlooked. However, the Spirit Author may have wished to show that personalities are not the issue, but rather principles. In the epistles, then, He could warn against false doctrine, if not designate the individual errorists. And in formal compositions, like the Gospels, He could answer heresy by stressing the true significance of a teaching. Possibly He has done so in Matthew and Luke, for they inculcate nothing but an orthodox Theology Proper.

Chapter VII

OPPOSITION FROM THE PRISON EPISTLES

Conservative scholars date the next series of New Testament books early in the seventh decade, perhaps later than the first and third Gospels. By common agreement this group numbers four: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians. The last named is usually made the end of the series, whereas the first two were doubtless written at the same time, with Ephesians following not long after. Paul was not slothful in correspondence while imprisoned at Rome, if he wrote all four letters then.

Colossians is recognized for the Christology of its pages. Doctrine revealing the person of Christ has been stated here with greater precision and fullness than in any other Pauline work. Alexander observes how the epistle bears the same relation to other epistles, that the fourth Gospel sustains to the other three Gospels. Lightfoot expresses himself:

> "New forms of error bring into prominence new aspects of the truth. The heresies of Laodicea and Colossae have been invaluable to the later Church in this respect. . . . The Person of Christ proved the complete answer to false speculations at Colossae, as it had been found the sovereign antidote to false practices at Corinth."[1]

The three great productions of the first Roman captivity (Eph., Phil., Col.) alike emphasize Christological truth, in contrast to Paul's earlier and later compositions.[2]

Varied opinions are entertained with respect to the actual nature of Colossian heresy. If Gnosticism does appear in the New Testament,

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[1] Colossians, p. 121.

[2] Gloag.

probably Colossians manifests it beyond any other work. A detailed study of the false teaching in Colosse, therefore, will be presented now.

The three constituent elements of the heresy, as generally understood, are: angelology, asceticism, and pride of knowledge, or exclusiveness. For instance, 2:16 warns against the second: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day" (A. S. V.). 2:18 cautions against the other two factors. In opposition to the first it has declared: "Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels" (A. S. V.); to the third: ". . . . dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (A. S. V.).

Paul replies to erroneous angelology in chapter 1, particularly, beginning with verse 15. Six pieces of evidence, or revelation, he adduces in as many verses, to prove the superiority which Christ enjoys over angels. Christ Jesus antedated creation, verse 15; produced creation, verse 16; sustains creation, verse 17; rules the church, verse 18; embodies deity, verse 19; reconciles creation, verse 20. 2:15 completes the Pauline apologetic by indicating that Christ triumphed over angelic hosts.

1:15 makes a twofold statement about the Son of God's love, 1:13, our redeemer, 1:14. One connects Him with deity, the other, with creation. He is εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, as well as πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως. Notice ἐστιν; for it suggests eternity, not incarnation. "The exalted Christ is now and continues to be what He was in His own nature as the Word before He became incarnate, John xvii. 5."[3] From the outset,

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[3] Abbott.

then, the apostle strikes a cosmological note. Earlier it was shown that Gnostics set forth a system of emanations, according to which from the supreme deity there emanated a somewhat lesser world, out of this world a second, and so on, until the divine element became so weakened and attenuated, that the genesis of a partly, or even wholly, evil world appears both possible and comprehensible. Gnosticism to the contrary, Paul speaks not only of ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἀόρατος; but also of God's εἰκών, whom he joins with creation as πρωτότοκος. Gnostic teachers posited a self-developing manifestation of the divine essence, whereas Colossians points to the first two persons in the Godhead, the second being the εἰκών of the first and also the πρωτότοκος of all creation. Εἰκών, to be sure, connotes manifestation. Yet the Scripture is testifying that Christ alone is this manifestation of God, and that, an eternal one. For the same verse continues by demonstrating the Image's priority to all creation. Πρωτότοκος has evoked debate. Without entering into long discussion, let it suffice to quote the acceptable thought Robertson voices:

> "The use of this word does not show what Arius argued that Paul regarded Christ as a creature like 'all creation' (*pāsēs ktiseōs*, by metonomy the *act* regarded as *result*). It is rather the comparative (superlative) force of *prōtos* that is used. . . . as in Col. 1:18; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6; 12:23; Rev. 1:5. Paul is here refuting the Gnostics who pictured Christ as one of the aeons by placing him before 'all creation' (angels and men). Like *eikōn* we find *prōtotokos* in the Alexandrian vocabulary of the *Logos* teaching (Philo) as well as in the LXX."[4]

The next verse amply substantiates this conclusion. Note the resemblance perhaps in sound and spelling between Paul's term εἰκών and the gnostic

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[4] *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, *in loc*.

αἰών. Neander recounts the different meanings attached to αἰών by gnostic cosmology. Beside its primitive connotation, *eternity*, Gnostics used it sometimes to denote the *Eternal*, as a distinguishing attribute of the Supreme Essence; sometimes, the original divine powers; sometimes, the whole emanation world (that is, the πλήρωμα), as separate from the temporal.

1:16 is appended to the verse preceding by ὅτι, so as to furnish good reason for the amazing words of 1:15. Not only does the Son manifest the invisible Father, but also the universe was created by (ἐν and δι', cf. εἰς) Him. Again Paul employs cosmological language while referring to Christ. He has specified both the heavens and the earth, the visible and the invisible, together with numerous angelic beings. Our interest should be aroused by the third and last specification. There is no doubt that Paul has drawn attention to angelic hosts, especially because the Gnostics insisted that the aeons or angels were to be worshipped, even trying to seduce these Colossians with the heresy. Some expositors go to the lengths of asserting that Paul has evinced a spirit of impatience, as if the angelology elaborated here must be false. Certainly the gnostic cosmology expressed much speculation by the use of terms found in Colossians and elsewhere throughout the New Testament. But still one will hesitate to introduce any error into an important affirmation like 1:16.[5] Already in the Old Testament an angelic hierarchy was inculcated. Recall the cherubim, the seraphim, etc.

Of the two declarations in 1:17, the latter alone contains new thought. While the former part in the verse mentions again Christ's

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[5] Moule, Harrison.

pre-existence with reference to creation, the latter adds the truth about His immanence therein. The creator is also the cohesive force. Messiah impresses upon creation that unity and solidarity which makes it a cosmos instead of a chaos.[6] Once more the apostle has taken over the actual language of Alexandrian Judaism. Compare Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, as well. Although the Gnostic would divorce God from His world by an almost endless chain of aeons, Paul unites Him with cosmical operation. The gnostic philosophy that matter is evil and was created by a remote aeon is swept away.[7] Συνέστηκεν, a perfect tense, but amplifies the significance of ἔκτισται, another perfect, 1:16.

1:18 depicts Christ as head of the church, too. He not only sustains the universe, but also the body, that is, the church. Ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, of course, points out a more intimate relationship than συνέστηκεν, 1:17, according to 2:19. The latter half of the present verse, observe, begins with a sufficient reason for constituting Christ the head (causal use of the relative, ὅς , Robertson). Paul has explained thereby the one justifiable application of a term like ἀρχή to the Son. Ἀρχή is defined by the epexegetic phrase following. Beside existing as πρωτότοκος of all creation, 1:15, Christ gained headship over the new creation in virtue of an atoning death and a resurrection. Thus the church, though something originated long after creation, must own Jesus Christ as supreme. For He heads this, a new creation or σῶμα. Possibly terms like κεφαλή and σῶμα possess apologetic force, since

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[6] Lightfoot.

[7] Robertson.

the gnostic cosmological dogma esteemed matter evil, 2:23.[8]

A balance has been noticed in 1:15-20; the last three verses paralleling the first three. Whereas 1:15-17 concern the superiority of Christ over angels by reason of deity, 1:18-20 dwell on His superiority over them because of headship in the church. 1:15 and 1:18 alike set forth the essential truth, which is embodied by the two verses succeeding each of them. Verses 16 and 17 expound the reasons for writing 1:15, as verses 19 and 20 confirm 1:18. Now, 1:19 maintains that headship of the church is based on incarnation, first of all. At the start, the grammatical subject must be determined for verse 19. Most commentators decide that ὁ πατήρ (verse 12) or ὁ θεός (verse 15) is to be chosen, not πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα. Surely this receives vital support from the exaltation of God the Father, even in a Christological passage such as the one before us. The verb κατοικῆσαι usually implies a permanent, or rather settled, residence. Πλήρωμα, however, evokes disagreement. Westcott will admit the connotation "Godhead," but argues for its indicating a Pauline thought, and not a defence against gnostic cosmology. Granting that it may not represent a familiar expression from the Gnostics, an application to Gnosticism could yet be made, since gnostic speculators distributed the divine powers among various aeons.[9]

1:20 supplements the previous verse upon incarnation by founding Christ's headship of the church on reconciling sacrifice, accomplished by a cross. Just as the subject of εὐδόκησεν in 1:19 occasions difficulty, the pronouns of verse 20 may puzzle the reader. It seems best to link

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[8] Harrison.
[9] Robertson.

them with Christ, except αὐτόν (conceded even by Robertson, although αὐτόν is not reflexive unless spelled ἑαυτόν). Another puzzling question appears in εἰρηνοποιήσας. What is its subject? Ephesians 2:15 lends weight to the view that Christ must be understood. Yet this ill accords with the emphasis on God the First Person, which has already been noted here. Exegetes who make πλήρωμα the subject of εὐδόκησεν construe it with the participle, likewise. Probably, if God be taken as the subject in verse 19, it would be well to join both the verbs of the twentieth verse with the Father. Does not 1:2 connect only God and εἰρήνη (the one other reference to "peace" in Col.)? Compare Philippians 4:7, etc.; contrast Ephesians 1:2, 2:14 (the setting for 2:15), 6:23. Εἰρηνοποιήσας, then, would be classified as a modal participle which belongs to εὐδόκησεν. The infinitive might suggest an objective or Godward aspect for the cross (εἰς αὐτόν), and the participle, a subjective and social (Eph. 2:14ff.).

By far the chief problem in the twentieth verse has still to be considered. What is the meaning of τὰ πάντα, which must be expanded in the last words of the sentence, when we read: "whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens" (A. S. V.)? There is much diversity of opinion abroad, especially over the interpretation of "things in the heavens." Similar phraseology has been used in verse 16 to describe the whole creation. But observe a different wording with respect to Christ's reconciling τὰ πάντα. Paul does not assert that He reconciled τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, in accord with 1:16 and His creative effort. Τὰ πάντα, of a certainty, is an expression of the

widest possible connotation. The context alone can narrow it.[10] Might verse 20 perhaps have confined limits for it, one should inquire, in as much as τὰ πάντα is written absolutely, and not defined at once, comparable to the preceding sixteenth verse? The apostle may have meant: the all things to be reconciled (remember that the church is primarily in view, from verse 18 on) . . . . namely, "whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens." A number of parallel passages in the related epistles come immediately to mind. Compare Ephesians 3:15, 6:9, Philippians 3:20. From the first reference it is ascertained that one part of the church is ἐν οὐρανοῖς, and another part, ἐπὶ γῆς . From the second, it is seen that the Lord is ἐν οὐρανοῖς, while from the third citation, that our citizenship has become located there (whither we depart at death, Phil. 1:23). Colossians 1:20, consequently, may signify provisional reconciliation for the world, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (note τὰ πάντα, verse 18), and actual, for the church together with all other saints, some of whom are already in heaven. At least, so the apostle applies the truth in verses following 1:21-23. Observe ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν, verse 23, a cosmological statement again. What of the gnostic allusion in verse 20, then? This soteriology was for the benefit of Docetic Gnostics.[11]

2:15 concludes the apostolic reply to false angelology. Alexander believes this verse to be one of the most obscure in the whole New Testament. Any exposition worthy of the name, therefore, would occupy a large place in our study. But treatment like that may not be allowed just one

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[10] Westcott.

[11] Robertson.

verse, lest the chapter lose balance and right proportions. So we propose to attempt no more than an outline of what seems to many the best understanding for the statement. From ἀπεκδυσάμενος, the first word and a verb in the middle voice, a transition in thought appears evident. Unlike the last verbal, προσηλώσας, it is not active voice; nor does its meaning agree with the subject of ἦρκεν, the chief verb in the preceding verse. Apparently verse 15 introduces a new subject for its finite verb and participles, as 1:19 manifested a subtle change of subjects. Likewise "the principalities and the powers" (A. S. V.) may indicate a different aggregation from "all principality and power" (verse 10), since the present verse relates to victory and conquest through the cross, where evil was vanquished. Particular angels might be designated here, not "all principality and power" (notice the change to plural number and articular nouns with verse 15), if evil is involved. Most commentators exegete ἐν παρρησίᾳ as meaning "with boldness, or confidence"; and ἐν αὐτῷ, as a reference to the cross. The idea of ἐδειγμάτισεν is only that of public exhibition. Lightfoot has summarized the doctrine in the verse with good judgment:

> "The powers of evil gathered about Him. . . . The final act in the conflict began with the agony of Gethsemane; but ended with the cross of Calvary. The victory was complete. The enemy of man was defeated. The powers of evil, which had clung like a Nessus robe about His humanity, were torn off and cast aside for ever. . . . The violence of the metaphor is its justification. The paradox of the crucifixion is thus placed in the strongest light--triumph in helplessness and glory in shame."[12]

Beyond a doubt the apostle rises to his climax in revelation of Christ's

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[12] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

superiority over angels. Gnosticism is denounced.[13]

Gnostic cosmology amounted to more than philosophic speculation. When it entered into the realm of daily living, asceticism developed. Colossians, therefore, warns also against erroneous ascetic practices, 2:16-17, 20-23. Paul did not content himself with a mere injunction not to pursue asceticism, to be sure. The warning begun in 2:16 is prefaced by verses 8-15, wherein he proves the antipathy between Christianity and ascetic living. Christian blessedness is superior to asceticism, we discover.

What did the ascetic teaching include? Two elements are discernible: regulation of food and of worship. The Mosaic ordinances pertained almost exclusively to solid food, but the Colossian heresy added to the Jewish dietary laws some restriction on drink. Essenes, Hebrew prototypes of the heretics in Colosse[14] drank only water. They abstained wholly from animal food, too. Whereas the first two phrases in 2:16 contain the full scope of gnostic food laws, the last three relate to ceremonial law. Compare Galatians 4:10. Probably the three are arranged in order of importance: First, ἑορτῆς refers chiefly to the annual festivals; second, νεομηνίας, to the monthly celebration more precisely; third, σαββάτων, to the weekly cessation from labor. See 1 Chronicles 23:31, for example.[15]

Colossian asceticism may not have demanded circumcision, like the Galatian heresy.[16] Yet the Hebraic tendency in all the ascetic doctrine

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[13] Robertson.

[14] Abbott.

[15] Lightfoot.

[16] Abbott.

surely influenced the manner with which Paul enforces his warning, 2:11 ff. Indeed, the Pauline argument aims to exalt grace, while demonstrating too the condemning feature of law. An ascetic life, after all, not only denies the flesh, but also implies that man can perform meritorious works. The Mosaic system itself belonged to a conditional covenant. Then, just as the Galatian heretics belittled Christ by insisting on law works, so did the Colossian false teachers. From 2:8 it is evident that the apostle measures all heterodox dogma with one measuring rod. He has rejected asceticism as οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν.

Scan the marvelous revelation with which the Spirit answers false ascetic practice. 2:9 bases the reply upon Christ being God incarnate (hence, come hither to save man). 2:10 adds that Christians are completed by virtue of an intimate relation with Christ in the new creation. No works, therefore, can supplement perfection. 2:11 unfolds the truth concerning entrance into a covenant agreement with God (circumcision signifies such a covenant, Gen. 17:10), how it was wrought in Christ by spiritual circumcision. Thus has the believer been separated from sin, the instrument of which is the body (Paul will concede no more than that to gnostic dualism). 2:12 interprets the circumcision given by Christ as co-burial and co-resurrection with Him--something connected with baptism. In supplying the Christian with resurrection life in Christ, all trespasses have been forgiven, 2:13, and the curse of the law removed, 2:14. At the cross Jesus Christ triumphed over evil angelic powers, as well as our sins, 2:15. Ascetic regulation belongs to an earthly career, not to death with Christ, where the sin life was put to death, 2:20. Finally, 3:5 ff. outline the faith walk that realizes on earth the perfect position and life,

graciously bestowed on Christians.

One more feature characterized the Gnosticism at Colosse, namely, pride of knowledge. Chapter 2 condemns it, while alluding to the false angelology and asceticism being taught. In 2:8 the attitude is designated a φιλοσοφία in harmony with ἡ παράδοσις τῶν ἀνθρώπων and τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. Φιλοσοφία does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is clear from a connection with κενῆς ἀπάτης, one article serving for both nouns, that Paul has not spurned all philosophy.[17] Hort probably discerns the true state of affairs, when he concludes that the heretics used a high-sounding term like "philosophy" for their doctrine, in order to disarm prejudice as they advanced Judaistic religion.[18] Compare 1 and 2 Corinthians, and the clever approach made by Judaism in Corinth. Philo and Josephus, of course, have also employed the word for religious systems, Judaism and Essenism included. Here, then, the apostle is flinging back at these false teachers a favorite term of their own.[19]

Reason for Paul's heated disapproval of gnostic philosophy is forthcoming. Human tradition had been its source, worldly rudiments, its subject matter. Therefore it did not measure up to Christ. Harrison avers that παράδοσις is impressive, because the apostle uses it everywhere else without any criticism. Τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου was discussed in a previous chapter, as crystallizing the gnostic influence perceptible in Galatians. It connotes "the rudimentary religious teachings possessed by the race," legalism and ritualism particularly. A meritorious system has never failed to appeal to the unregenerate world, desirous of religion.

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[17] Abbott.
[18] Harrison.
[19] Lightfoot.

Compare verse 20 ff.

2:18 and 23 refer to humility, so as to indicate that the Colossian heresy evoked both pride and lowliness. That a false humility was inculcated appears from the latter portion of verse 18, as well as from verse 23. Ταπεινοφροσύνη is ordinarily considered a virtue; see 3:12, for instance. One troublesome word in 2:18, ἐμβατεύων, furnishes perhaps the chief clue to an appreciation of gnostic meekness. Doubtless Ramsay has discovered the true sense for this ἅπαξ λεγόμενον. From inscriptions in Klaros he shows that the word is used of an initiate into the mysteries, who "set foot in" and performed the rest of the ceremonies.[20] The Phrygians were certainly a mystery-loving and speculative people during the first century. Εἰκῆ κ.τ.λ. seems a fine touch, Alexander writes. These teachers, according to Paul, instead of being really humble, as they professed, were puffed up, very proud of their assumed humility. It looks as if the Spirit is here taking up some watchword of the heretics.[21] They may have boasted about being directed ὑπὸ τοῦ νοός, or of owning a higher intelligence, perhaps a spiritual insight. But the apologete declares that their mind was carnal, not spiritual.

Colossians has been marked by various characteristics of gnostic error. In Galatians the heresy had already promoted circumcision, in the earliest New Testament books it had manifested esotericism, and in the two earliest Gospels, a false Theology Proper. Now Colossians stresses the heterodox cosmology, while combatting also the other features of Gnosticism to appear before. Possibly all the Prison Epistles will

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[20] Robertson.

[21] Lightfoot.

emphasize this same dogma. Dualism, Docetism, and soteriology, three remaining tenets held by the sect, loom up one by one in the later portions of the New Testament.

Like Colossians, Philemon holds a unique place among the Pauline Epistles. Whereas Colossians was signalized by doctrine and polemic, Philemon is remembered for its personal and sociological character. There is no distinct statement of dogma in the book, so that its affectionate temper stands out the more prominently, because an epistle composed at the same time as Colossians. Of a surety, the occasion which called it forth was altogether commonplace. Indeed, Jerome asserts that in his day there were some who either doubted or entirely rejected the work, since they conceived it beneath the dignity of Paul to interest himself with a mere runaway slave; and even if it were written by the apostle, they regarded it a private epistle, not at all designed for public edification.[22] Tertullian, the first to notice the book distinctly, leaves a similar testimony:

> "This epistle alone had an advantage from its brevity, for hereby it has escaped the falsifying hands of Marcion. Nevertheless I wonder that when he receives an epistle to one man, he should reject two to Timothy, and one to Titus, which treat of the government of the Church."[23]

That the short work, Philemon, should be overlooked by Marcion, the gnostic critic, does seem remarkable. For it bears testimony against the heresy, just as much as Colossians, Luke, etc., probably.

As a supplement to Colossians, although itself without direct bearing on Gnosticism, Philemon may belong to the Pauline apology. In the

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[22] Gloag.

[23] Quoted by Gloag, Introduction to the Pauline Epistles, p. 294.

preceding epistle, Colossians, Paul has traced out a connection between asceticism and law works, so as to make manifest the gnostic aversion to grace. Philemon fully illustrates the opposition between law and grace. If anywhere, this short, personal letter reveals a gnostic influence just here. Few even to the present day realize the absolute distinction between a grace and a law principle. Consequently the message of Philemon deserves more attention than it has received at times.

Lightfoot believes that Onesimus represented the least respectable type of the least respectable class in the social scale. Furthermore, there was absolutely nothing to recommend him. On the contrary much had arisen to condemn the man. He was a slave, and what made things worse, a Phrygian bondman. Then he had confirmed the popular estimate of his class and nation by what he did. He became thief and runaway. His conduct, of course, did not differ in any way from the vulgar type of slavish sin, as far as we know. Rome was the natural destination for such renegades, since in the thronging crowds of the metropolis appeared a man's best hope for secrecy. Besides, in the dregs of that city one would be sure to find the society of congenial spirits.

How the fugitive came into contact with the imprisoned Paul no one knows. Whatever motive may have drawn him to Paul, when once he did meet him, there was no escaping. In time he accepted the gospel and friendship of the princely missionary, repenting sincerely for the crimes committed. This step, however, could never repair all the damage which was done. Restitution must follow; hearty service must be rendered Philemon. So when an opportunity arose for sending Onesimus back to Colosse, Paul wanted him to go.

But how could the man ever face his master? Roman law, more cruel than Athenian, practically imposed no limits to the power of the master over his slave. The alternative of life or death rested solely with Philemon, and bondmen were constantly being crucified for much lighter offences than that of Onesimus. What expectation of mercy and forgiveness could the new convert have from a defrauded master, in a slave age? Had there been reason to count on leniency or sympathy, the imprisoned correspondent might have been satisfied with writing Colossians 4:1, 9; and employing Tychicus as mediator, Colossians 4:7-8.

The gravity of Onesimus' offence involved a large penalty, if the law were to be enforced. But Paul besought Philemon to welcome the fugitive home as more than a slave, even a brother beloved--one as dear as the apostle himself, verses 15-17. With respect to the theft, Paul did not in so many words request forgiveness. Rather was his approach to bid the master charge the sum to him personally, verse 18-19a. In verse 19b, however, the missionary quietly reminds his friend that he owes him everything, that is, through conversion.

Grace does not make the law void. Therefore Paul wished to furnish just reparations for the theft (the lost years of service perhaps could not be treated the same; yet if they could, verse 18 will care for all this debt). Although grace establishes law, it nevertheless can save the lawbreaker. For it substitutes in his place one able and willing to take the due punishment. Gnostic legalism either knew or cared nothing about the meritorious work of Christ. For the Gnostic desired law works as one means of salvation from the flesh. Thus pride was engendered, when a distinctive character had been produced through asceticism. An

aristocracy developed speedily, which was opposed to the Christian brotherhood. But grace lies at the farthest remove from a spirit like that, Colossians 3:10-11. Even the conventional barrier between slave and free vanishes, when "Christ is all, and in all." As proof positive that gnostic superiority must never be adopted in the church, doubtless the Spirit has given us Philemon for a true picture of grace.

If Colossians presents the full-orbed Christology of Paul, Ephesians contributes his most profound theology. Colossians emphasized the incarnation, Philemon, imputation, now Ephesians stresses election. While Colossians is known for its polemic atmosphere, and Philemon, for its personal nature, Ephesians is marked both by irenic and general characteristics. Indeed, Ephesians probably bears the same relationship to Colossians, and Philemon its appendix, as Romans to Galatians. For in general, it is correct to affirm that Ephesians has expanded the ideas set forth by Colossians.[24]

The Gnostics found Ephesians congenial to their viewpoint. Marcion, for instance, admitted the book to his catalogue (though he called it the epistle to the Laodiceans). And Valentinus quoted 3:14-18, in order to lend support to his heretical opinions. Earlier it was stated that gnostic theologians used Romans freely, because its doctrine of election harmonized with their own exclusive religious pretensions. In as much, then, as Ephesians teaches election truth, can the apostle have intended to defend this particular revelation from any gnostic perversion? Careful study of the letter must guide to an answer.

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[24] Gloag.

1:3-14 epitomizes all the dogma set forth by Ephesians. Centered around the truth of election, observe the several divisions or features in the teaching: it is ἐν αὐτῷ; πρὸ καταβολῆς κοσμοῦ; εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους κ.τ.λ; εἰς υἱοθεσίαν, κληρονομιάν, ἀρραβῶνα ; κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν κ.τ.λ; εἰς ἔπαινον κ.τ.λ. ; ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ κ.τ.λ. ; κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. So election represents the outpouring of grace upon a lost world, in order that a sinner can be saved and God be glorified in His Son. What place remains for angelology, asceticism, pride of knowledge? What kinship with Gnosticism does Christianity ever manifest? Contrary to all heresy, the Scripture always demands: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31).

Election links man with Christ, ἐν αὐτῷ (1:4) discloses. Colossians too had declared the centrality of Messiah in salvation. Notice how the same emphasis is continued by Ephesians from verse 1 on to the end of the book. Verse 1 described the readers as πιστοί "in Christ Jesus"; verse 2 prayed for a bestowal of grace and peace from the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as God our Father; while verse 3 began a long thanksgiving with the summary statement: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Thus the whole epistle is exalting Messiah.

However ἐν αὐτῷ in verse 4 be understood, it certainly suggests the redeeming work of Christ (verse 7), which alone can save a soul and unite him to the new creation. Gnosticism on the other hand promoted angel worship, asceticism, and exclusiveness, according to Colossians. So Ephesians magnifies the Redeemer in His person above angels, 1:20 ff. As in Colossians 1:16, likewise here Paul is asserting a primacy for Christ

over the angelic hosts. These titles were all used in the gnostic speculations about a graduated angelic hierarchy.[25] Similarly, Ephesians replies to asceticism when it extols the work of Christ for the saved, 1:23. In virtue of the new creation and nothing more, the church is esteemed the very fulness of Christ. Most modern commentators believe that the apostle intimates here: the church is filled with Messiah, who Himself fills all.[26] Whatever we decide about the verse, still it is true that the most significant term τὸ πλήρωμα (Col. 1:19, 2:9) has now been related to Christ and His union with the church. Furthermore, Ephesians combats gnostic pride. For it joins all believers together, as fellow members of one mystical body, 4:4-6, 13.

Secondly, election dates from past eternity, 1:4. Therefore, instead of God being far removed from the world because of sin, He must have foreseen every move which man would make, and yet desired to save souls, before ever creating one. Worship of angels, however, was being inculcated by heretics, because they reasoned that God was not immanent. Note then the stress in Ephesians upon divine immanence. Every chapter insists on God's nearness and Christian fellowship with Him. For example, 1:11 tells of "him who worketh (ἐνεργοῦντος) all things after the counsel of his own will"; 2:22 says, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"; 3:19, ". . . . that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (A. S. V.); 4:6, "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (A. S. V.); 5:18, ". . . . be filled with the Spirit"; 6:23, "Peace be to

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[25] Robertson.

[26] Abbott.

the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father. . . ." Neither πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου nor the similar phrase, ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου (Heb. 4:3, cf. Eph. 3:9), occurs elsewhere in Paul.

1:4 discloses too the manward purpose of election: εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους κ.τ.λ. Ἐν ἀγάπη, the final words in the verse, have been connected with verse 5 by some expositors. Perfection is made the goal, not a prerequisite or sign, of the Christian life. Gnosticism, however, taught an exclusiveness based upon asceticism and possession of knowledge. Probably in reply to an ascetic emphasis, ἁγίους has been expressed. 5:26-27 amplifies it thus:

> "that he might sanctify [ἁγιάση] it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy [ἁγία] and without blemish [ἄμωμος]" (A. S. V.).

Because of sin (2:1 ff.) the sinner could not make himself acceptable to God, any more than he could induce Christ to intervene on his behalf. Hence election is necessary, not the ascetic life. Together ἁγίους and ἀμώμους evince the positive and negative sides of the one idea.[27] Incidentally, Paul does not employ the latter term outside of the Prison Epistles. The same two adjectives are combined in Colossians 1:22, as well as 5:27 and here. Ἀμώμους implies an apologetic against gnostic pride of knowledge in Colossians 1:22 and Philippians 2:15, the other two passages where it is found, if not in Ephesians. 2:7 of Ephesians adds the cosmological touch to this, a third truth concerning election.

Election brings the believer great exaltation, according to 1:5, 14.

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[27] Abbott.

Υἱοθεσίαν εἰς αὐτόν summarizes all the blessing attendant upon salvation. The term connotes "adoption," not "sonship," which would be υἱότητα.[28] For Christ alone is God's son by nature, υἱὸς μονογενής. Saints are only adopted into the family of God through regeneration, 4:13, 5:1, 2:10, etc. One special privilege connected with sonship, or adoption, Ephesians stresses, namely, κληρονομία, 1:14. Compare Romans 8:17. Since this inheritance pertains to the future, 5:5, the Christian has not entered into it thus far. But a foretaste he does enjoy, an ἀρραβών. Notice that the word is not ἐνέχυρον, "a pledge," rather it is ἀρραβών, "an earnest."[29] So the portion given is related to the inheritance promised, as a part to the whole. How great must be the whole, if God the Spirit (verse 13) is the down payment Himself![30] Gnosticism, of course, speculated about an immense gulf between God and man. Consequently the apostle replies to gnostic doctrine by emphasizing not only the immanence of the Spirit, 2:18, 22, 4:3-4, 30; but also His enabling with a view to godly life, 3:5 (cf. 1:17), 16, 5:18, 6:17-18. Σάρξ (2:11) no longer restrains God from communing with man, 2:13 ff. From a hopeless condition described as ἐν σαρκί, the saint enters the realm known as ἐν Χριστῷ. Stier believes that ἐν Χριστῷ, as a mystical predication, is the very soul of Ephesians.[31] And fellowship in Christ, remember, is mediated by the Spirit, 3:16-17.

Fourthly, election accords with (κατά) the sovereign will of God, 1:5b. Compare verses 9b, 11. In the short space of a few verses the author accumulates synonyms, and repeats himself in order to clarify this.

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[28] Lightfoot.
[29] Lightfoot.
[30] Harrison.
[31] Ellicott.

Observe: εὐδοκίαν, θελήματος, προέθετο and πρόθεσιν, βούλην. Nothing in man determined the gracious plan drawn up, 2:1-3, whereby some out of the fallen race have taken the gift of salvation. Therefore if God had not chosen some, no one would have accepted redemption, 2:4ff. An effectual call was alone responsible for one being saved, 4:4, although the world is quite accountable for its choices because a race of free moral agents, 4:17 ff. Here then is another tenet of salvation by grace, which the Gnostics misunderstood. For Gnosticism was opposed to the total depravity of man, when it inculcated legalism, aristocracy, and angelic mediation. Notice the testimony of Ephesians to human impotence now: 2:1-3, 8-9, 4:22, 5:8, 6:12. The Gnostic did not consider the universal death-grip of sin, 2:1, 4:22; the throttling hold of Satan, 2:2, 6:12; the wrath of God resting upon all sinners, 2:3; the spiritual darkness caused by sin, 5:8. Nor did the heretic realize that salvation is wholly by God's grace through man's faith, 2:8-9. Only Ephesians contains the remarkable phrase, τὸ πλοῦτος of divine grace, 1:7, 2:7. (Πλοῦτος, however, is a term which the apostle used frequently.) To be sure, the epistle is noted for an emphasis upon saving grace.

Election actually contributes to the glory of God, Paul affirms in 1:6, 12, 14b. So far from complicating divine perfection, saving grace reveals a new glory in God. Doubtless this forms the ultimate aim of election, 3:21. Lightfoot writes admirably:

> "The end of redemption, as of all creation and all history is the praise and glory of God. This same phrase εἰς ἔπαινον (τῆς) δόξης is twice again repeated in the context, vv. 12, 14, as if the Apostle could not too strongly reiterate this truth. As 'thanksgiving' is the crowning duty and privilege of man (see. . . . Col. i.

> 12, ii. 7, iii. 15, etc.), so 'praise' is the ultimate right of God."[32]

Note how Paul begins Ephesians with a thanksgiving, Εὐλογητὸς κ.τ.λ., and closes it with "unto the praise of his glory." In verse 6, appropriately enough, God's glorious manifestation of grace was joined to the beloved Christ; in verse 12, to Christians (Jewish saints in particular); in verse 14, to the Christians' earnest, the Spirit. Thus Christians are linked with the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity, as being alike to the glory of the First Person. "So great a salvation"!

Fellowship with man does not detract from God's infinite glory, as gnostic cosmology maintained. On the contrary, God desires to make the redeemed His home, Ephesians shows. Not only was the church baptized into Christ, so as to be in Him and He in them, 2:15, 4:4-5; but the Father Himself dwells in the saints as in a temple, and they live in Him, 2:22, 4:6. God brings His sons around Himself, rather than keep them at a distance. Whereas the Second Person receives the church as His own body, 5:29-30, the First makes Christians into members of His household, 2:19, 3:15. Ephesians also stresses the immanence of the Third Person, as indicated above. When Gnosticism erred in appreciation of Christ the Mediator, 1:7, the gates were flung open to the influx of many and grievous departures from the truth.

In the seventh place, election does not contradict any kind of "wisdom and prudence," verse 8. Rather it harmonizes with every sort (πάση) of σοφία and φρόνησις. The former term refers to mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense,[33] itself the more general and

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[32] *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul*, at Eph. 1:6.
[33] Aristotle.

comprehensive word for *wisdom*; the latter, to lines of action, that is, the practical application of σοφία to details. Verse 9 explains the previous statement of verse 8, on God's making grace to abound toward us in wisdom and prudence. He did so by revealing to us "the mystery of his will," a secret which the next verse unfolds:

> ". . . . according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth. . . ." (verses 9, 10, A. S. V.).

This secret of God, now disclosed, becomes the rationale for all election dogma.

If ἐν Χριστῷ is the very soul of Ephesians, the song of the one in such communion with God will doubtless be a rhapsody on the theme of verse 10. This special mystery recalls Philippians 2:9-11, John 5:22-23, as well as Colossians 1:16 ff. Alexander concludes from Ephesians 1:10:

> "A great and unexplorable saying! Perhaps as good a paraphrase as has been made of it is the following: To bring together again for himself all things and beings hitherto disunited by sin into one combined state of fellowship and unity in him who is the universal bond, Christ. This is the consummation that swims into view in this great epistle, which is the crowning revelation of the New Testament. It contemplates nothing less than the rehabilitation of the universe in Jesus Christ and the reconstitution of the universe on a Christian basis."[34]

The same expositor proceeds by suggesting that the work of reunification has already begun, since Christ has united the two irreconcilable portions of mankind, Jew and Gentile, 2:14 ff.; and that the ideal of unity is more fully set forth in the classic passage to follow, 4:3-16. From the book's constant emphasis upon faith, the readers could surely see that

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[34] *The Bible for Home and School*, *in loc*.

Paul is teaching a universalism restricted to the saved.

So election is Christocentric, always has been, always will be. Thus it proves reasonable; for the glory belongs to God alone, and no man would have been saved had the Father not chosen, Christ died, and the Spirit called. Gnosticism, however, is anthropocentric through its legality and exclusiveness. 3:8-12, together with other sections of Ephesians, defends the true Christology against heresy like gnostic cosmological doctrine.

Finally, election blessing is appropriated by man through τὸ εὐαγγέλιον with its terms, 1:13. Compare verse 12b. No other message does God proclaim today. The Ephesians heard this word of truth and believed it; that settled the sin problem. Forthwith they were sealed by God the Spirit. Observe that τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is introduced as "the word of the truth" (A. S. V.). Doubtless an apologetic force attaches to the expression, because 4:21, 5:9, 6:14 stress ἀλήθεια and 4:13-14 warns against false teaching. A gospel of salvation merely by faith in Christ must clash with gnostic legalism, angelology, and tradition.

Sublimity characterizes Ephesians as no other book. How is that to be explained? Why does the apostle dwell upon election as in no other letter? The eloquence of Colossians was traceable to Gnosticism. Now is not election a favorite doctrine with the Gnostic? Can the grave situation in Colosse have changed before Ephesians was written? Were not Colossians and Ephesians written by the same author, at practically the same time, about much the same subjects, to neighboring cities? Earlier it was stated that Ephesians, in general, has really expanded the ideas set forth by Colossians, although irenic and general as letters go. What then

hinders a specific allusion to Gnosticism in Ephesians, particularly since election truth conflicts with gnostic tenets at every point? To the present writer, Ephesians will lack an occasion and its sublimity any sufficient cause, if at least a potential gnostic danger is not understood.

A cordiality and intimacy is expressed in Philippians, greater than in any other of Paul's epistles to church bodies. Indeed, Philippians seems the least doctrinal letter of all the Pauline correspondence. Since Ephesians appears the most profound, Philippians, because following not long afterwards chronologically, must look the more devoid of theological content. As the Corinthian Epistles revealed the true nature of Christians in Achaia, Philippians discloses the real breadth of character possessed by the apostle, as no other book.

The first object of the Philippian epistle was to thank the readers for co-operation and fellowship in Christian witnessing. Another aim relates to threatened error; hence the personal testimony of chapter 3. False teachers were at present outside the faithful assembly, but they might soon obtain entrance. Therefore Paul voices his stern warning against legalism and license here.

3:1-17 contains the admonition opposed to legality. Verse 1 may be understood as a heading for both sections of the chapter, 1-17 and 18-21. It sounds the keynote which distinguishes the whole book: "rejoice in the Lord," commenting that the repetition is not "irksome" (A. S. V.), but rather, "safe." Next, verse 2 begins the actual precaution, with βλέπετε repeated thrice. In this striking reiteration the apostle cautions against the heretics' pride, zeal, and teaching, each time with

a single pungent word: κύνας, κακοὺς (ἐργάτας), κατατομήν. Notice the alliteration and the three articles. The thrice expressed "beware of," together with the recurrence of the article thrice in all three phrases, can show that Paul alludes to a well-known and well-marked party, whether in or out of the church.[35] A summary statement like verse 2 seems to identify the heretical teachers at once. They were gnostic legalizers, similar to others in Galatia, Corinth, and elsewhere, the context suggests, as well as the second verse. Judaizers, like Jews, must have employed the designation κύνας for the Gentile, Matthew 15:26. Ἐργάτας recalls 2 Corinthians 11:13, an earlier charge raised against the Judaistic. Likewise κατατομήν brings to mind the apology that Paul used against the Judaic party in Galatians 5:12.

Verse 3, another summary statement, declares the Christian position which legalism would impugn. For the apostle has revealed in what sense circumcision, the basic requisite of the Judaizer, applies to the believer today. Notice the bold argument, whereby the author silences his foe by the use of terminology made popular through the heresy itself. In brief, Paul is showing that Christians have spiritual circumcision--yes, are ἡ περιτομή now, as personally antitypical of the Old Testament rite that secured entrance into covenant relationship with God. No one less than the Third Person of the Godhead makes this possible in experience, while the Second Person grants the necessary grace-position. Boasting or even trusting in such a thing as flesh (legalism, with its physical circumcision and concomitant features, must be involved), then, has been

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[35] Lightfoot.

superseded for the church by glorying in Christ. The grace principle displaces that of works. Compare Romans 2:23,[36] Colossians 2:11.

There follows a long testimony from Paul's life experience, verses 4-14, which will amply confirm the doctrine of verse 3. Compare Galatians 1:10-2:21, 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:18, Romans 7:7-25. Verse 4 has summed up the reason for such a personal allusion. The situation is well depicted by one commentator:

> "With ἐγὼ μᾶλλον we must understand δοκῶ πεποιθέναι in the same sense; 'If they arrogate to themselves these carnal privileges, I also arrogate them to myself.' St. Paul is using an *argumentum ad hominem*; in his own language, he is for the moment 'speaking foolishly,' is 'speaking not after the Lord,' 2 Corinthians xi. 17."[37]

Verses 5-6 detail the apostle's pre-conversion attainment through the flesh. Note the sevenfold record of his achievement: entrance into the Abrahamic covenant by the prescribed rite at the set time, birth into the covenant nation, blood connection with an honorable tribe, adolesence in an orthodox Jewish home, affiliation with the party known for strictest orthodoxy, zeal for Pharisaism, and utmost fidelity to the minutiae of the law. One is impressed by the use of anarthrous nouns here. Robertson does not exaggerate when he avers: "A marvelous record, scoring a hundred in Judaism." What others were attempting, Paul executed with distinction. Thus the fourth verse has been substantiated.

With verses 7-11 the writer unfolds the transformation which revolutionized his life and thought. Christ saved him, and thereby his interpretation of life or scale of values was discarded for a new one. Verse 7 tells about the transition from old to new, whereas verse 8

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[36] Harrison.

[37] *Philippians*, *in loc.*, Lightfoot.

brings this testimony up to date, besides indicating that the apostle never in the least regretted conversion. Christianity, or rather Christ, cost him τὰ πάντα , but he accounts them σκύβαλα in contrast to his gain. In verse 9 the crucial question of righteousness is explained. Instead of having one's own feeble effort at perfection, faith in Christ brought Paul an infinite righteousness, whose source is God and whose mediator is Christ. Responding to a salvation like that, the convert utters his new life-purpose in verse 10. He has no righteousness to work out, yet his career is none the less full and godly. Indeed, now he knows true godliness for the first time, namely, continuous harmonizing with the death of Christ through the power of His resurrection being inwrought. Faithfulness to the divine aim of perfecting the believer will secure reward, verse 11 proves. Exegetical problems arise with verses 10-11, especially the latter statement. At all events, verse 11 intimates not doubt, but humility[38] and hope.[39]

Further, verses 12-14 maintain that Paul has not reached perfectness in the present life. Therefore the exclusiveness of gnostic legalism is rejected, as verses 4-6 evinced the apostle's superiority over Judaizers when law works were being considered, and verses 7-11, the law's futility to justify. According to verse 12, the writer, so far from achieving perfection now, is entered in a race, that he may lay hold of the prize (cf. the previous verse on rewards) for which Christ laid hold of him. That is, the Savior desires His convert to succeed in the Christian life. See 2:13, 16, Ephesians 2:10. Verses 13-14 but repeat and clarify the

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[38] Vincent.

[39] Lightfoot.

life-purpose of Paul, the great apostle.

Concluding the first paragraph, our author exhorts the readers to imitate him, verses 15-17. Compare 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9, 1 Corinthians 11:1. Verse 15 sharply defines the perfection attainable now, for it employs the word τέλειοι as descriptive of the race just pictured. Christian τελειότης then is represented by a struggle, not a static condition. Besides, the fifteenth verse particularly commits to God the one who may disagree with Pauline testimony. Lightfoot has affirmed, incidentally, that τέλειοι seems to be an epithet much affected by heretics both at this time and later, not without a secondary reference to one "instructed in the mysteries." Compare Barnabas 4, Irenaeus i. 6. 4, Clement Alexandria *Paedagogus* i. 6, Hippolytus v. 8, *Clement.Homil.* iii. 29. The progressive nature of a Christian life is borne out by verse 16. Paul means that, having come so far, the thing to do is simply to proceed "in the same path" (τῷ αὐτῷ) wherein one has already been walking.[40] Finally, verse 17 mentions the apostolic example as something to emulate.

The second and closing paragraph of chapter 3, verses 18-21, answers heresy characterized by license. Only γάρ is used by verse 18 to show the transition into a new subject. At first this may surprise the reader, since legality and licentiousness form opposite poles in conduct. Yet as a matter of fact, the one gnostic heresy united both features. When dualism lay at the bottom, it was to be expected that the erroneous philosophy would develop in two directions. So Rutherfurd writes:

> "But another and contrary result also followed from the principles of the sinfulness of matter, and of redemption

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[40] Robertson.

> as deliverance from the flesh, viz. that there was an easier way of relief, by treating the soul and the body as separate entities which have nothing in common. Let the soul go its way on the wings of spiritual thought, while the body may indulge its fleshly desires. For, so it was held, as body and soul are entirely distinct in their nature, the spiritual cannot be defiled by anything, however carnal and gross, that the body can do."[41]

Verse 18 emphasizes the danger from licentious teaching. It was practised by many; persistent; lamentably counter to the sublime doctrines of grace, made known in the cross. Lightfoot traces this antinomianism back to the major Pauline epistles. Compare Romans 16:17 ff., 1 Corinthians 4:18 ff., for example. Certainly the Prison letters have spoken out against moral laxity, Colossians 3:5 ff., Philemon 18, Ephesians 4:17 ff. Here in verse 18 the articular expression τοὺς ἐχθροὺς κ.τ.λ. defines the class forcefully, specifying them as enemies κατ᾽ ἐξοχήν. Πολλοί, note, is left without limitation. Therefore Paul does not necessarily mean that the foe has invaded Philippi. Had they now attacked this congregation, the warning would likely have assumed the proportion of the citations just given. Κλαίων looms up as unique in the apostle's writings. His grief became even audible. See Acts 21:13. Τοὺς ἐχθροὺς κ.τ.λ. is also unique in his books. It recalls, however, the sound condemnation of other Gnostics, Galatians 5:11, 6:12, 14.

Like verse 2, the nineteenth verse will summarize the characteristics of Paul's enemy in a single sentence. A fourfold statement is being made relative to soteriology, theology, pride and thought in general. The first division of the verse has been introduced by the relative, ὧν , and the second division, by ὧν also. Mellone was quoted earlier, in order to

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[41] *Gnosticism*, art. I. S. B. E., p. 1242.

confirm the fact that salvation is the ultimate object in a gnostic system. Accordingly, the present epistle reveals with candor the fallacy of a salvation by law works, when opposing legalism. And now it mentions, at the outset of verse 19, the mistaken soteriology inculcated by licentious Gnosticism. Instead of libertinism bringing σωτηρία, it must lead to a totally different end. Τέλος with the sense of "final lot, destiny"[42] appears several times in the New Testament; for example, 2 Corinthians 11:15, Romans 6:21-22. Philippians 1:28 contrasts ἀπώλεια and σωτηρία. Indeed, τέλος will remind one of the gnostic claim to τελειότης (cf. verse 15 above).

After a solitary reference concerning the libertine's future, the apostle has sketched his immediate outlook. First, he names the deity to whom the heretics pay their homage. Notice a parallel in Romans 16:18. Here the writer uses yet more stinging words. "Sensuality in food, drink, sex then as now mastered some men."[43] Instead of their God being far removed from earth and the material universe, he is linked with ἡ κοιλία by Paul's analysis. Secondly, the libertine boast has been stigmatized as "their shame." Lightfoot interprets the denunciation correctly: "The unfettered liberty, of which they boast, thus perverted becomes their deepest degradation." Compare Hosea 4:7. True bodily glory is forthwith expounded by the apostle in verse 21. Last of all, the sensual mind will concentrate on earth, Paul writes. Gnostic philosophy vaunted itself on cosmological speculation and understanding of mysteries. But its earthly limits, when ruled by sensualism, were plain enough. Contrast

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[42] Thayer.
[43] Robertson.

Colossians 3:1 ff. The abrupt nominative, οἱ τὰ κ. τ. λ., occurring without any grammatical connection, expresses amazement.[44] See Mark 12:40.

Verse 1, the heading proper for the first section of chapter 3, hinted at the imminent danger which legalism offered, as something necessitating the application of the epistle's key phrase and our author's personal testimony. Similarly verse 18 alluded to the danger in licentiousness. Verse 2 and 19 are akin, it has already been indicated. Now follows the statement of verses 20-21, a doctrinal reply to libertine heresy, comparable to verse 3. The four declarations of these two verses match the fourfold judgment in verse 19. Γάρ, the conjunction of verse 20, discloses the relationship between the preceding and the new to be such, that verses 20-21 formulate truth which confirms verse 19. They substantiate the harsh sentence passed by characterizing the Biblical soteriology as directly opposite teaching.

Whereas the future spells doom for the licentious, verse 19a, the first half of verse 20 states that "our citizenship is in heaven" (A. S. V.). Fausset has summed up the rich significance of the ἅπαξ λεγόμενον πολίτευμα:

> "Two circumstances make the frequent use of 'citizenship' (ch. i. 27; iv. 3) an appropriate image in writing to Philippi:--1. It was a Roman colony, possessing, besides local privileges, Roman citizenship, of which the people were naturally proud. 2. Paul himself at Philippi had made a remarkable use of his citizenship (Acts xvi. 37-39): a happy illustration of our state absent on earth, but enjoying the protection and civic privileges of heaven."[45]

Heaven and salvation, then, was the sure destiny of Christians. Verse 19b dwelt upon the sensual deity of libertinism. But verse 20b describes

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[44] Lightfoot.

[45] Critical and Experimental Commentary, in loc.

the Christians' Lord as holy, bringing salvation, to return from heaven. Furthermore, verse 19c explained that the Gnostic gloried in the shameful, while verse 21a promises a conformity for the earthly body of the Christian, which will transform it into likeness to Christ's glorious body. Harrison quotes Westcott appropriately on this comparison between verses 19 and 20:

> "The moral significance of such a doctrine as the Resurrection of the body cannot be over-rated. Both personally and socially it places the sanctions if not the foundations of morality on a new ground. Each sin against the body is no longer a stain on that which is in itself doomed to perish, but a defilement of that which is consecrated to an eternal life."[46]

Lastly, verse 19d considered the libertine mind earthly centered. On the other hand, verse 21b prophesies the subjection under Christ of everything mundane, as of things not yet fully subject to God, hence imperfect. So the Christian is not content with the present world-system.

Licentious doctrine becomes here a pronounced development in Gnosticism, so far as the New Testament is concerned. Therefore it seemed wise to examine verses 18-21 carefully. The cosmological theory which permeated the first three Prison Epistles has taken secondary consideration in Philippians. Compare 2:5-11 for the one reference. However, 3:1-17 will manifest the inner harmony of the book with its three companion epistles. Throughout the next series of New Testament volumes dualism and libertinism may take on prominence. For the passing years saw the heresy unfold itself and dogmatic implications receive embodiment, so that its philosophy began to mold conduct.

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[46] Unpublished class notes, in loc.

Chapter VIII

APOSTOLIC REPLY TO DUALISM

About the same time that Paul wrote the Prison Epistles, other Christians were producing inspired literature. For one, the Evangelist Luke brought out his masterful church history, which now is called "The Acts" (A. S. V.). Aberly notices that the consensus of recent New Testament scholarship dates the book somewhere in the last decade of century one, A. D. Yet he himself, with other conservative students, has preferred the early date, as the simpler and more natural explanation for Acts 28, etc. Another work to appear in the middle of the seventh decade was 1 Peter, sound expositors believe. Even good critics, however, are divided somewhat in their evaluation of 2 Peter, some linking it with Peter and some not. More modern scholars deny the genuineness of this book, than that of any other.[1] With several worthy authorities the present writer decides that it must belong to the apostle Peter, and follow 1 Peter without a long interval. Everything considered, then, Acts and the Petrine letters will doubtless form a new series in our canon, succeeding the Prison Epistles.

Acts is an indispensable connection between the New Testament gospels and epistles. While the gospels hold the peerless history of Christ's first advent, Acts has preserved a record of apostolic church history. However, one volume alone suffices to sketch ecclesiastical development,

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[1] Robertson.

when four were needed in describing the incarnation. Two doctrines characterize The Acts, one of which also made Luke a distinctive work (incidentally, the third gospel and Acts came from the same pen): Pneumatology and the doctrine of Christ's resurrection. Only the latter will enter into our present investigation. Ἀνάστασις and ἀνίστημι occur more frequently in Acts than elsewhere--over twenty times altogether, referring to Christ.

There is nothing more striking in the history of primitive Christianity, than the marvelous change wrought within the disciples by a belief in our Lord's resurrection.[2] Furthermore, it must now be admitted on all hands that the church was born as the result of this confidence, because Pentecost signifies no more than a new age's formal inception, the church era. But Christian insistence on resurrection clashes with the very foundation principle of Gnosticism, namely, dualism. Earlier a statement has been quoted from Marcion, which maintained that it was impossible for the body to partake of salvation, since mortal elements are taken from the earth. Compare the teaching of Ophitic Gnostics in Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 1:30. 13 ff.; and of still others in Justin, *Trypho*, c. 80.[3] 1 Corinthians was interpreted hitherto as an apology opposed to gnostic doctrine. Did not its one doctrinal chapter concern resurrection truth? See also 2 Timothy 2:18, composed shortly after Acts. No doubt The Acts breathes a spirit no more apologetic than Romans. In view of the evidence, however, can it not voice a testimony against heretical doctrine just as definitely as Romans, in order to prepare the church for a gnostic

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[2] Griffith Thomas.

[3] Heffern.

onslaught later on, the beginnings of which were already felt? At all events, the basic tenets of Christianity and Gnosticism conflict.

1:22, the first allusion to Christ's resurrection in Acts, makes a witness thereto the distinguishing feature of apostleship. It recalls the previous verse, 1:8: "Ye shall be my witnesses" (A. S. V.). The Christian faith is objective, Messiah centered, directed toward an absent Lord and His first advent (one who was cast out by the world, never to be seen by unsaved men again). For His reappearance after death has become the core of apostolic testimony, guaranteeing as it does the success achieved by the first coming. In addition, salvation now hinges upon a right adjustment to this person. Therefore a world-wide movement was to be inaugurated, aimed at reporting everywhere the incarnation and the saving desire of Christ. Leaders had to be chosen for the task, hence the plan whereby Judas would have a successor, 1:22. So far from keeping silent about the physical resurrection of Messiah, then, the apostles were pledged to evangelizing the whole earth with their witness, although it greatly antagonized current philosophy, 17:32.

Three statements about Messiah's resurrection appear in the Pentecost sermon of the apostle Peter. 2:24 may perhaps furnish the first public announcement that Christ had risen, since word from the soldiers can be excepted as mere circumstantial evidence, Matthew 28:4, 11 ff. There is considerable difficulty in expounding a participial phrase here, yet the chief thought of the verse seems plain. Messiah was raised by God because death could not hold Him. Immediately Psalm 16 is cited, so as to confirm this everlasting fellowship of God and Christ which made corruption impossible. Dying itself has not been counted foreign to

Messiah, only continuance in the death state. Death and burial did not harm the incarnate Son of God's purity, any more than birth into the human race at the first. A prompt resurrection saved Him from defilement of any kind. Where could the Gnostic discover a flaw in such an experience? Bodily dissolution, of course, spells corruption and the condemnation passed upon Adam for initial transgression. But the divine Mediator knew none of that. Compare 4:10, 5:30 (with ἐγείρω). Gnosticism then could find no valid grounds on which to question the spotless resurrection gained by Christ.

According to verse 31, David prophesied in Psalm 16 about Messiah and His rising, because thus he was guided to understand the royal covenant given him by the Lord. Jehovah had bound Himself unconditionally to bestow on David an heir, who would occupy the Davidic throne forever, 2 Samuel 7. That being the case, the promised Seed could not fail, even if overtaken by death. It had to involve resurrection with all punctuality for Him, lest the throne be left unoccupied, or rather the heir be missing. In 2:31, therefore, Peter explains how the beloved scion of Judah predicted an undelayed ἀνάστασις. Again The Acts cuts athwart gnostic dogma, when it connects prophecy with the risen Mediator. What refutation could a Gnostic advance against the sure word of prophecy? If Gnosticism construed a millennium with no material background, the Bible certainly does not, when it links a resurrected Savior to its glories, for instance.

Verse 32 contains the personal testimony of an apostle, in accord with 1:22. Peter courted death by upholding Christ like this, 12:3 ff. Not long before, he had disclaimed any knowledge of his Master, when faced with similar danger, Luke 22. Just as far as once he retreated,

now the fisherman boldly advances to meet the enemy. This was not due to the fact that he had expected resurrection for Messiah after the cross, Luke 24:11. Nevertheless on Pentecost an undying conviction gripped the man, as one enabled by the Spirit. In consequence he was ready to risk his life, to carry the message of Christ everywhere, and to forsake all. He would henceforth stake everything on the fact that Jesus Christ had risen from the grave and become the Redeemer, so much had his faith grown. Had a Gnostic questioned the reality of Messiah's bodily resurrection, Peter would no longer be moved. Finally he had come to know whom he believed. Compare 3:15 (with ἤγειρεν).

3:26 apparently embraces further testimony from Peter concerning the resurrection. But it must doubtless be interpreted in the light of a preceding declaration, verse 22, where a Messianic prophecy is quoted as using the word "raised up" (ἀνίστημι) in the sense: "provided, prepared, and gifted."[4] Still, 4:2 does signify that the message delivered on Solomon's porch had mentioned Christ's victory over death. Ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ connotes "in the case of Jesus," probably. Compare, for the same use of the preposition, 1 Corinthians 4:6.[5] From 4:2 on, Acts will emphasize the hostility which arose between Sadducees and Christians. In the gospels the outstanding leaders of the opposition were Pharisees, but in Acts Christ and His church must contend chiefly with Sadducee powers. How can the significant change have occurred? Possibly it should be traced to nothing else but resurrection teaching, 4:2, 23:8. The Pharisees were not deliberately antagonizing the Sadducee by stress on

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[4] Brown.
[5] Robertson.

resurrection dogma, in their public ministry, like the Christians, from all appearances. Therefore the Sadducees were so much distressed by Christian witness, that they imprisoned Peter and John, verse 3, only to threaten them in a called meeting of the Sanhedrin, before release, verse 21. Not long afterwards, they went to the length of taking counsel to kill the apostles, 5:33. And soon there arose such a full tide of persecution, that it caused the death of Stephen and scattered Christians far and wide, 8:1 ff. Of a certainty the resurrection was dividing sharply between unsaved and saved. Incidentally, the origin of Sadducean theology is unknown. Since, however, this party led in a Hellenizing movement, whatever doctrine they entertained may well have been colored by the gnostic tenets abroad in Hellenism (cf. 1 Cor. for example). See the I. S. B. E. article, Sadducees, by Thomson.

Like 2:42-47, the section extending from 4:32 to 4:35 presents a summary.[6] Four particulars are named here: a common spirit, a common apostolic testimony, a common grace or blessing, and a community of goods.[7] Regardless of the disfavor resting upon the church, and the multitude now gathered together through common belief, the apostles did not swerve from their original testimony. Furthermore, they were witnessing to Christ with great power, 4:33, that is, either with powerful and effective eloquence, verse 13, or by the performance of impressive miracles, 3:7.[8] The verb "give witness," ἀπεδίδουν, is not the ordinary word for testifying. It connotes "paying back a debt."[9]

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[6] Aberly.
[7] Gloag.
[8] Gloag.
[9] Robertson.

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Compare 19:40, contrast 5:8. Truly the disciples were indebted to their risen Lord and Savior in many ways. 4:33, then, pictures a successful church, as something built upon a confession of Christ risen, so far as doctrine is involved.

Not till chapter 10 does another significant allusion to the resurrection occur. 10:41 (cf. the previous verse) furnishes more proof that a physical rising was entailed. Thus a suitable testimony to Christ introduced the Gentile entry into the church, as it had accompanied also real Pentecost. Note the several details in verse 41: Messiah showing Himself only to divinely chosen witnesses, His eating and drinking with them after resurrection. With regard to the first, Robertson observes:

> "Peter is evidently stating the thing as it happened and not trying to make a convincing story by saying that both friends and foes saw him after his resurrection. It is the 'historian's candour' (Paley) in Luke here that adds to the credibility of the narrative. The skeptical Jews would not have believed. . . ."[10]

Luke 24:41-43, etc., will expound the second point. So historical features are brought forward by Peter here. Gnosticism might attempt to explain away the apostolic witness, but the endeavor is doomed to an inevitable failure. Ponder the telling words of one dependable scholar:

> "Every effect must have its adequate cause, and the only proper explanation of Christianity today is the resurrection of Christ. Thomas Arnold of Rugby, no mean judge of historical evidence, said that the resurrection was 'the best-attested fact in human history.' Christianity welcomes all possible sifting, testing, and use by those who honestly desire to arrive at the truth, and if they will give proper attention to all the facts and factors involved, we believe they will come to the conclusion expressed years ago by the Archbishop of Armagh,

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[10] Word Pictures in the New Testament, in loc.

> that the resurrection is the rock from which all the hammers of criticism have never chipped a single fragment. . . ."[11]

The Pauline witness to the resurrection does not figure largely in Acts until chapter 13, after the first missionary journey has gotten under way. Some good critics decide that verse 33 will parallel the usage of ἀνίστημι found in 3:22 and 7:37. But the context hardly favors their exegesis, since the very next verse applies the verb to bodily resurrection. 13:33, therefore, must refer again to the Davidic covenant, like chapter 2, this time linking resurrection with prophecy in Psalm 2. Notice that the word "fulfill" is connected not with Psalm 2:7, but with ταύτην, namely, the Davidic promise. Consequently the Psalm passage may actually teach the eternal generation of Christ, which of course necessitated and harmonized with a prompt rising from the dead (cf. Acts 2:24 ff. and Peter's kindred argument). Granting that, the apostle Paul has mounted glorious heights by his joining together the eternal generation and resurrection. How absolutely flawless must the latter have been!

Then 13:34 cites a Messianic (Davidic, too) prediction in Isaiah as evidence that Christ has not only risen, but also will never return to corruption. Calvin has perhaps clarified the new statement from the apostle:

> "This place of Isaiah, which is here cited, seemeth to make but little for proof of Christ's immortality. But it is not so. For, seeing Isaiah speaketh of the redemption promised to David, and affirmeth that the same shall be firm and stable, we do well gather by this the immortal kingdom

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[11] *I. S. B. E.*, art. Resurrection of Jesus Christ, p. 2569.

> of Christ, wherein the eternity of salvation is grounded. If the grace be eternal which God saith He will give in His Son, the life of His Son must be eternal, and not subject to corruption."[12]

Salvation itself is bound up with Christ's resurrection. If the Gnostic presumes to deny a foundational tenet like that, he will cut the life cord of Christianity.

17:3 embodies another message from Paul concerned with the resurrection. The historian has outlined here the scriptural approach whereby Paul evangelized the Thessalonians. His twofold exposition of Old Testament prophecy, relative to Christ both suffering and rising, is parallel with the testimony from Messiah Himself, Luke 24:26, 46. A new note will appear in this chapter, advanced beyond the previous sections of Acts, because ἔδει (recall Luke 24:26) is employed. God foretold the necessity of Christ's resurrection as well as His suffering, the just for the unjust. Who is the man that dares contradict a divine imperative?

In Athens the same remarkable apostle confronted philosophy (and at its very home). According to 17:18, he fearlessly witnessed there to "Jesus, and the resurrection." "It is doubtful if Paul had ever met a more difficult situation."[13] Granting that, when did the marvelous gospel of resurrection face a harder test? Had the missionary even the least doubt about the truth or fitness of his message, surely this would have been the time for him to reword its terms. Instead of being diluted, however, the unique resurrection word has been kept uppermost as the climactic fact of all, verse 31. Compare 26:23. How much does depend

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[12] Quoted by Gloag, Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, in loc.
[13] Robertson.

upon this one event in history! Acts has shown conclusively that the bodily resurrection of Christ possesses the greatest significance. Woe then to the Gnostic who would question its verity! Compare Festus, and the manner in which resurrection testimony made him writhe, 26:24.

The Petrine Epistles will supplement Acts in two particulars. Historically these books concern a time of trial similar in nature to what Paul experienced at the hands of Rome. Doctrinally they continue and expand the Christological emphasis of The Acts. Whereas 1 Peter stresses the First Advent, "the sufferings," 2 Peter has emphasized the Second Coming, "the glory that should follow," 1 Peter 1:11. Peter had already occupied a prominent place in the church (see Acts). By his letters, then, he bequeaths to Christianity a final testimony. His witnessing has never changed in content from Pentecost to the end of life, it will be found.

Though a short epistle, 1 Peter employs the related words πάσχω and πάθημα more frequently than any other book. For the present investigation only some verses containing these key words demand study, namely, the Christological references. Doubtless the question which a dualist raises here would take the form: Did not matter contaminate the incarnate Son of God? Earlier it has been indicated that Docetic thought sprang up in Gnosticism, because the dualistic view had taken full possession of the heresy. Now, in the Petrine Epistles, one seems to come just a step short of docetic thought. (Compare the chapter to follow.) Recall the earnest warnings especially of 2 Peter against such erroneous doctrine, like 2:1 ff. The Thessalonian Epistles of Paul had been obliged to unfold eschatological doctrine in reply to some heretical teachers,

with 2 Thessalonians more urgent upon them than 1 Thessalonians. So the case appears with Peter and his two works (they also discuss the Advent of Christ, like 1 and 2 Thessalonians).

1:11, the first Christological allusion for examination, links Messiah's suffering and later glory with the fact of salvation, verse 10. Σωτηρία, as a manifestation of Messianic grace toward man, was foretold by the Old Testament prophets, although these men knew not the actual hour or kind of season that would introduce Christ to the world. Familiar as we are with the antithesis of suffering and exaltation, a little thought shows their relationship to be far from obvious, especially when connected with Messiah. Indeed, what could the promised Christ have to do with anything harmful? Whatever hurt He did undergo, Peter now witnesses that it was for man's salvation, according to ancient prophecy. Interestingly enough, a reference is made to angels in the next verse. For Gnostics taught an elaborate cosmology. That angels were subordinate to Christ without exception seems implied. Hort interprets the apostle's words in admirable fashion:

> "Beholding the earth from above and beholding it within the range of wider horizons, they could not look on those first scenes of the new drama of Providence without feeling their prophetic significance, and watching eagerly for fresh fulfilments of the Divine process, of which the call of the Gentiles was at once the beginning and the symbol."[14]

If then the Lord's suffering pertained altogether to salvation, how could it be esteemed a defiling thing? Compare Acts 1:22, etc., and the apostolic testimony thoughout Acts on the point. Furthermore, note the

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[14] The First Epistle of St. Peter, in loc.

integral harmony between suffering to the death and subsequent glorification, expressed in the closing phrase of 1:11: τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας.

Then 2:21 carries on the revelation of the soteriological value in Christ's suffering. So undefiled was this humiliation, that the apostle can affirm our Lord suffered in a way which sets an example for saints generally. No doubt the cross death is not at present in view, so much as the pre-cross experiences. Observe also the previous verses of the chapter, with regard to just what value may be attached to this kind of suffering:

> "For this is acceptable [χάρις] if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it. . . . but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (verses 19-20, A. S. V.).

Verse 23 adds another point to the description, when it discloses how Christ did not threaten while enduring pain. There was no protest from the divine sufferer, as if the pains offended His character. The one time that He did cry out under the burden of a world's sin, He addressed Himself to God with significant words that were not quite hopeless: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:45). For the guilt of the sin being borne had sundered an eternal fellowship with God the Father.

4:1 indicates beside that the incarnation spelled a certain amount of suffering even for Christ; therefore His people ought to be prepared in mind for a similar lot. That the Messiah's unique glory has not been impaired by suffering on earth, will appear from the context. The preceding verse, 3:22, holds remarkable words like: "who is on the right

hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (A. S. V.). As dreadful as were the pains, so wonderful, the glories. No one suffered as did Christ, and yet no one is so exalted as He. Notice again in 3:22 a cosmological allusion.

Joy will result in accord with the measure that the Christian partakes of Messiah's suffering, 4:13. The next verse has probably explained what is meant by sharing in His pain, εἰ ὀνειδίζεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ κ.τ.λ.("in the matter of the name of Christ," Robertson). Peter knew what it involved to suffer because of loyalty to Christ and His testimony, Acts 5:40-41; compare 9:16. In the case of Messiah, suffering and glory were linked with His first and second comings; similarly the believer finds a relationship between present trial and the Advent to come. Indeed, he may discover glory in his daily suffering, verse 14. Where then is any contamination from bodily woe?

A final mention of Christ's trials, 5:1, has named Peter as a witness thereof, on which account he may exhort his fellow elders, because μάρτυς here is practically equivalent to ἀπόστολος.[15] Once the writer had shunned the idea of Messiah suffering, Matthew 16:22. But now he gladly assumes such a title as: "a witness of the sufferings of Christ," when composing one final word of testimony and exhortation.[16] Doubtless even a Peter had at last come to realize the superlative importance of Christ's humiliation, its sinlessness and exemplary value. Every time the apostle uses πάθημα with reference to Christ, he also has specified δόξα. Just this alone would prove the new attitude of the man toward his Lord's

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[15] Bigg.

[16] Harrison.

trials.

2 Peter will point out how dualism lies at the basis of the Christological emphasis in Acts and the Petrine letters. That the libertines of 2 Peter were dualistic, like heretics described in Philippians 3, may be seen from 2 Peter 1:16. Whether or not the verse designates the Second Coming by παρουσίαν, it will make plain that apostolic witness to the advent is to be differentiated from "cunningly devised fables." Fausset has ably expounded this crucial citation:

> "*cunningly devised*--'devised by (man's) wisdom.' . . . as distinguished from what *the Holy Ghost* teaches (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 13). Cf. also chapter ii. 3, 'feigned words.' *fables*--as heathen mythologies, and subsequent Gnostic 'fables and genealogies,' [1 Timothy 1:4] of which the germs already existed in Judaism, combined with Oriental philosophy in Asia Minor [see 1 Peter 1:1]. The Spirit's precautionary protest against the rationalistic mythical theory of the Gospel [i. e., the incarnation recorded in the gospels]."[17]

Apparently the false teachers were inculcating as dogma that both a divine Messiah (δύναμιν, cf. verses 2-3) and His earthly (physical) glory, παρουσίαν, could not be accepted, since matter was of such an evil character as to forbid the incarnation of deity; hence their extreme libertinism (chapter 2), when they deemed matter incurably wicked and spirit absolutely pure. So it was taught that the gospel records of an incarnate Christ were to be spiritualized. For μύθοις, when employed with σεσοφισμένοις, must bear the sense of "an allegorism."[18]

When the truth relative to the Second Advent which 2 Peter furnishes is scrutinized, the dualism then abroad cannot be questioned. First the apostle testifies concerning the Transfiguration, 1:17-18, as a foregleam

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[17] *Critical and Experimental Commentary*, *in loc.*

[18] Bigg.

of Messiah's Second Coming. Note the several features to be set forth. In the first place, there Christ received from God "honor and glory," verse 17. Just as 1 Peter connected intimately the Messiah's suffering and glory, this scene joins honor and exaltation with incarnation as most compatible. What honor is being signified? Evidently the acknowledgment: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"[19] verse 17. No other has been accorded like honor, for the eternal Son is alone recognized thus (". . . . is [ἐστιν] my beloved Son"). See John 1:1, ἦν; 1:14, μονογενοῦς. And what *glory* is suggested here? Naught less than the splendor of incarnate deity, μεγαλειότητος("the *light* which shone round Him: answering to the *Shechinah* glory in the *Tabernacle*," Fausset), verse 16. Both the remaining occurrences of the term connote deity, Luke 9:43, Acts 19:27.[20] Compare 2 Peter 1:17, τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, and 1:18, τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει, as confirmation of the heavenly background for the scene. Secondly, "there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory" (verse 17, A. S. V.). Not only did Christ manifest the eternal Shechinah glory, but the Father likewise, μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης. For this phrase probably refers to the νεφέλη φωτεινή, Matthew 17:5. Peter's account of the event varies from the gospel record, since his purpose in alluding to it at all has guided the description. Simply "the Heavenly Voice arrests his attention and becomes the main object of his thought, because it leads him on to speak of the other voice, that of prophecy."[21] Observe the Trinity, then: the Father's voice, the Son's transfiguration, the Spirit's prophesying. In the third place, "This

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[19] Fausset.
[20] Robertson.
[21] Bigg.

voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount," verse 18, A. S. V. Peter had two fellow witnesses of the glorious event, Matthew 17:1. So the principle of Deuteronomy 19:15 has been fulfilled, making Peter's testimony thereto valid: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established" (A. S. V.). First of all, therefore, New Testament apostles concur in establishing the material character and glory of the incarnation.

Next the writer adduces testimony from Old Testament prophecy to confirm the fact that Messianic glory and the Advent, though material in nature, are yet sinless, 1:19-21. Compare 1 Peter 1:10-12, where Peter had earlier combined the witness of God's Old and New Testament spokesmen. Himself an eyewitness of that prophetic scene, the Transfiguration, our apostle continues on from verse 18: "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure" (verse 19, A. S. V.). Fausset has stated the likely meaning for these unusual words:

> "Previously we knew its *sureness* by faith; through that visible specimen of its future fulfilment, assurance is made *doubly sure*: so that, even after Peter and the other apostles are dead, those whom he addresses will feel sure that they have 'not followed cunningly devised fables.'"[22]

Like Paul in Philippians 3:19, Peter must denounce the gnostic sophistry without mincing words (cf. verse 16, above). So he compares the prophetic word to a lamp; and not to any light, but one which shines "in a dark place," verse 19. Αὐχμηρῷ, here only in the Testament, is an old adjective for "squalid" (A. S. V. margin). If the Gnostic boasted of his

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[22] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

intricate and occult learning, the hypocrisy is herewith exposed by contrast with Biblical truth. Then to climax the allusion to ancient prediction, the author explains what is the real character of scriptural prophecy. It does not represent a prophet's grasp on a certain subject, verse 20;[23] but rather an expression of the Spirit's will, verse 21. Consequently the prophets rank with apostles as a witness to divine revelation. For when they were of old given the mind of God, they delivered it over unchanged. Furthermore, their testimony harmonizes with the apostolic word.

A third sign in the epistle that dualists are involved will appear in its forecast of apostasy, chapter 2. The third chapter dates their falling away as "in the last days," verse 3, before relating it to promise of Messiah's Advent. Introductory to chapter 3, then, the previous verses have detailed the heretics' moral character and sure destruction. 2:1 may outline the precise nature of the error. In verse 1 the heretics are named "false teachers who shall privily bring in destructive heresies" (A. S. V.). Therefore they will possess a system of doctrine contrary to Scripture, and bring it secretly into the church. Besides, their teaching will concern Christ, for it amounts to "denying even the Master that bought them," A. S. V. Jude 4 can interpret the last-named phrase: ". . . . ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (A. S. V.). Δεσπότης is an old word for "absolute master."[24] So these heretics deny Christ and redemptive grace by a lascivious conduct, practised in spite of entrance

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[23] Robertson.
[24] Robertson.

into the church and assumption of the teaching office. Hence the apostle must write at once: "bringing upon themselves swift destruction," verse 1, A. S. V. Dualism has been intimated here, for the libertine professes to be saved, along with others (παρεισάξουσιν, verse 1); and yet boldly engages in lustful pleasure. Compare 2 Timothy 3:5. How could that be done unless a dualistic philosophy were followed? After all, the heretics made great pretensions to wisdom and Christian liberty: "Uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error; promising them liberty. . . ." (verse 18 ff., A. S. V.). To be sure, "The liberty which they propose is such that fears not Satan, nor loathes the flesh."[25] Bigg has written of verse 18: "There is great passion in the words. Grandiose sophistry is the hook, filthy lust is the bait, with which these men catch those whom the Lord has delivered or was delivering."

Finally, chapter 3 affords one more clue that dualism is to be considered here. This point will turn upon the interpretation of Messiah's return, verse 4 ff. The International Critical Commentary has concluded at the outset:

> "With these words [verse 3] St. Peter begins his attack upon the denial of the Parousia, the doctrinal error which underlay the moral extravagances of the false teachers. He has had the subject in view from the outset of the Epistle. The ἐπαγγέλματα of i. 4 are the ἐπάγγελμα of iii. 13; other connecting links are to be found in ἡ αἰώνιος βασιλεία, i. 11; παρουσία, i. 16, and the references to κρίσις and ἡμέρα κρίσεως in the second chapter."[26]

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[25] Fausset.
[26] *In loc.*

Can abstruse dogma like eschatology, however, ever become a basic error? Our own viewpoint inclines us to go beyond eschatological truth to dualism for the root heresy. For the same scholar must expound verse 4 thus:

> "Notice, again, the subtle, almost modern, character of the doubt. At Thessalonica men doubted only whether those Christians who had died before the Parousia would be permitted to live with Jesus in His kingdom (I Thess. iv. 13 sqq. . . .). In the Churches addressed by St. Peter the doubt rests upon reflexion of a scientific type, the long vista of the past, the apparent immutability of the world--thoughts which in our time have become still more oppressive [to some].
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> The doubt may have been suggested simply by the broad stretch of Old Testament history, but it was very possibly connected with the doctrine of the eternity of the world, which had been adopted from Aristotle by the Platonists and by the Jewish mystics of the time. This tenet is defended by Philo . . . . The doctrine of the eternity of matter was found by the Rabbis, and possibly by the LXX. translators, in Genesis i. 1; see Gfrörer. . . . It is probable that the false teachers were Jews by birth and Christians by name, who knew more or less about these scholastic debates. The arguments which they would employ--they may be gathered from Philo--would sound to St. Peter very like 'mockery.'"[27]

Harrison discovers in verse 5 ff. a threefold reply to the error: creation was upset one time, namely, by the flood; apparent delay is not to be construed as signifying that there can be no future judgment from heaven; the need for speedy repentance because the Advent is imminent. Thereby the foundation of dualism is well disposed of by Biblical revelation. Acts and the two epistles of Peter alike refute the gnostic error.

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[27] I. C. C., in loc.

Chapter IX

ANTAGONISM TOWARD DOCETIC THEOLOGY

The Pastoral Epistles follow not far behind 1 and 2 Peter in point of time. Final letters from the apostle's pen, they unite easily to form one more series in New Testament literature. All three epistles were composed within the space of a few years, the last of them appearing when martyrdom was in prospect. Conservative scholars date 1 Timothy and Titus during the interval between the first and the second Roman imprisonments of Paul, and 2 Timothy, at the close of the second. Some would place 1 Timothy before Titus so far as chronology is concerned. Significantly enough, the three were not welcomed by heretics. For their testimony opposed error more than that of other Pauline works.

In the Pastoral Epistles it seems that Christianity is regarded as essentially doctrine.[1] According to the same critic the message of this revelation may be summarized as: deliverance from sin, fellowship with the risen Christ, and future participation with Him in glory. 1 Timothy will embody the first section of that threefold witness, Titus, the second, and 2 Timothy, the third. Διδασκαλία is employed fifteen times in all three letters, which amounts to more than twice as often as in all the remainder of the New Testament. Incidentally, the Pastorals' unique emphasis has been well accounted for:

> "The reason why our Epistles regard Christianity mainly as doctrine lies in the circumstances of the time. Many had

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[1] Weiss.

> turned away from the truth (Tit. i. 14; comp. I. vi. 5; II. ii. 18), and it was to be feared that this would be the case in the future in yet greater numbers (i. 4). There had arisen a gnosis, falsely so called (I. vi. 20) . . . . an unhealthy tendency (ver. 4), a being occupied with empty, unprofitable foolish, even profane questions of controversy (ματαιολογία: I. i. 6; Tit. i. 10; μωραὶ ζητήσεις : II. ii. 23; Tit. iii. 9; βέβηλοι κενωφωνίαι: II. ii. 16; I. vi. 20), which gendered only contention and discord (I. i. 4, vi. 4; II. ii. 14, 23; Tit. iii. 9)."[2]

1 Timothy stresses the mediation of Christ which has procured deliverance from guilt. Chapter 1 will begin this emphasis by a reference to the purpose behind incarnation, verse 15. The actual statement thereof is prefaced by words peculiar to the three epistles: πιστὸς ὁ λόγος . Compare Revelation 21:5, 22:6. Apostolic testimony, Fausset shows with justice, evidently has the same authority as Old Testament Scripture. Observe now the Christological declaration in verse 15: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Paul is affirming plainly that Christ became incarnate for soteriological reasons. Half of the assertion, "Christ Jesus came into the world," is phraseology found especially in John.[3] Brown has concluded about its usage there: "Of all our Evangelist's descriptions of Christ, none is more familiar than His 'coming into the world.'" As applied to Jesus Christ by John, it includes the notion of His mission,[4] just as here. But first of all, it must imply pre-existence.[5] Above everything else, however, will not the expression refute Docetism? For it emphatically denotes transference from one scene to another, namely, from heaven to earth in His

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[2] Biblical Theology of the New Testament, Weiss, II, p. 127.
[3] Huther.
[4] Plummer.
[5] Fausset.

case. Compare verses 2 and 12 above, where Christ is named Κύριος, as the Father has the title assigned to Himself in verse 14. So far from allowing Docetic thought any value, verse 15 has regard to incarnation as the one means (even for God) whereby man could be saved. Though a succinct affirmation only expounded by the Fourth Gospel at a later time, this one verse by itself seems to possess an answer for Docetism. What will make the assertion loom above a similar word in John is the fact that the present one was framed by the most determined foe of Christ. Hence the following confession is recorded in the verse: ". . . . sinners of whom I am chief."

Further, 2:3-6 discloses the character of soteriological mediation. According to this testimony, no limits can be placed upon the potential scope of mediation. Thus 1:15 is recalled, where the very chief of sinners has borne witness to Christ as his Savior. Verse 3, like 1:1 and 4:10, however, describes the Father as Σωτήρ. Doubtless Messiah has been considered Savior (cf. Tit. 1:4, etc.) because He acts as the Father's agent in saving men (so is "mediator," verse 5 here). In contrast to the world of humanity needing salvation (verse 4), the fifth verse has asserted the unity of our Savior and of His mediator. That the mediatorial agent is more than man or angel (or any aeon) will be seen particularly from verse 6, where Paul shows how the life sacrifice of that one was needed to propitiate God for sin. Again Docetism has been confuted. Perhaps the Gnostic would grant the oneness of God, but certainly not the unity of the theanthropic mediator. On the contrary Gnosticism inculcated a series of emanations in its cosmology, 1:4. Compare Plummer in loc. Fausset comments on 1:4:

> "Not merely genealogies common among the Jews, tracing their descent from the patriarchs, which Paul would not class with 'fables,' but Gnostic genealogies of spirits and aeons, or emanations (*Alford*). So *Tertullian*, 'Adversus Valentinianos,' chapter iii., and *Irenaeus*, 'Praef.' The Judaizers here, whilst maintaining the obligation of the Mosaic law, joined with it a theosophic ascetic tendency, pretending to see in it mysteries deeper than others. The *seeds*, *not the fullgrown* Gnosticism of the post-apostolic age, then existed. This formed the transition between Judaism and Gnosticism. 'Endless' implies their tedious unprofitableness (cf. Titus iii. 9). Scripture opposes to their 'aeons' the 'King of *the aeons* (so Greek *v*. 17), to whom be glory throughout the aeons of aeons.' The *word* 'aeons' was possibly not used in the technical Gnostic sense as yet; but 'the only wise God' (*v*.17), by anticipation, confutes subsequent notions in the Gnostics' own phraseology."

One more passage in the epistle probably had made reply to Docetism, 3:16. This remarkable verse contains an incarnation creed, ὁμολογουμένως κ.τλ. It is entitled "the mystery of godliness," notice. Compare verse 9. "Mystery" is a term borrowed from secular use, comparable to the metaphors taken out of daily life for the New Testament. Christianity "gloriously transfigured" its connotation.[6] The pagan mystery was something kept hidden, the secret of a privileged few; the Christian μυστήριον is truth which man could not have discovered by himself (verse 9) but now is made known for all to receive (ἐφανερώθη . . . . ἐκηρύχθη, verse 16). Christ incarnate is the mystery of godliness, verse 16 will demonstrate by a sixfold assertion. See Colossians 1:27, etc. Εὐσεβεία, a key word of the Pastorals, has been used with the word "mystery" likely with descriptive force. Contrast 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Observe the several parts in the terse confession. "He who was manifested in the flesh" (A. S. V.), section one, answers the Docetic Gnostic frankly.[7]

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[6] Plummer.

[7] Robertson.

Compare 1:15. Not only did Christ enter the world by incarnation, but section two affirms that He was "justified in the spirit" (A. S. V.), that is, evinced as righteous with regard to his spiritual or innermost being. See Romans 3:4, Matthew 27:54. Thereby the incarnation was proved successful, because nothing had contaminated Messiah's purity. Section three explains how Christ, as one distinct from angels (both in His Godhood and manhood), had come under their interested observation while on earth, 1 Peter 1:12. Incarnation verity must elicit even their wonder. Beside, section four adds that the marvelous truth was spread far and wide in the world. The fifth section has furnished insight into the result of this preaching, so as to confirm its credibility. Then the last section concludes with reference to Christ's favorable reception in glory. From every angle, therefore, the incarnation has been scrutinized, only to find Docetism wanting completely.

Titus dwells upon sanctification truth even more consistently than 1 Timothy. In its two Christological passages, 2:11-14 and 3:4-8, probably Docetism is attacked once more. First of all, 2:11-14 has taught that grace will discipline the Christian. For the saving grace of God has amongs its objects the ἁγιασμός of believers.[8] Verse 11 is connected closely with the previous statement about God as Savior (verse 10), because it attributes to Him the manifestation of world-wide saving grace. In verse 12 is begun the sanctification emphasis of the paragraph. Then the next verse has introduced a hope which will undergird the separated Christian, namely, a second manifestation from

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[8] Ellicott.

above--Christ's glorious advent. Compare verse 11. Finally, verse 14 explains how it is possible for Messiah also to receive the title "Savior." The last two verses, 13 and 14, have stressed the deity of Christ. This a cautious expositor will have to admit:

> "The wording of the Greek is such that absolute certainty is not attainable [on verse 13]; but the context, the collocation of the words, the use of the word 'Epiphany,' and the omission of the article before 'Savior'. . . . all seem to favour the Revisers' rendering. And, if it be adopted, we have here one of the plainest and most direct statements of the Divinity of Christ to be found in Scripture."[9]

Who else but God could redeem a soul (verse 14)? Since Messiah Himself is divine, it follows surely that the incarnation must be true and Docetism false. Verses 13 and 14 have linked together the suffering and the glory of Christ like 1 Peter 1:11, etc. Incompatible as such things may appear, evidently the same person experiences the two. Indeed, since verse 14 is written after the thirteenth verse, it will seem the more obvious that Messiah's future glory has been in no wise impaired by past woe. Of a surety the end justified the means in this sad case. How amazing but satisfying that truth sounds, when contrasted with gnostic speculation, 1:14 ff.

3:4-8 sets forth a still more comprehensive view of redemption than 2:11-14. Whereas the stress in chapter 2 had been placed on discipline, it falls here on the divine mercy which provided salvation, so as to make possible saintliness. As might be expected, the two passages evince similarities. Verse 4, like 2:10, has designated the Father as "Savior," while verse 6 applies the title to Christ likewise, comparable to 2:13.

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[9] The Expositor's Bible, in loc.

Like 2:11, the divine mercy is referred by verse 4 to a special manifestation in times past, ἐπεφάνη, namely, the hour Christ became incarnate.[10] In verse 5 the ministry of the Holy Spirit in regeneration has been detailed. When the first words in the verse allude to human depravity, 2:14 will be recalled. Then verse 6 has named Christ as the mediator between God and men; and verse 7, rounded the doctrinal statement upon Trinitarian activity by one additional mention of the Father as originating cause. Verse 8 will form a transitional thought to the succeeding portion of the paragraph, since its opening section, "Faithful is the saying" (A. S. V.), looks back to verses 4-7. The rest of the verse has exhorted Titus to apply this truth to the believer's sanctification.

Again the deity of Christ is being urged with apologetic intention, verses 9-11. Father, Son, and Spirit equally have a part in the stupendous work of saving men. All Three have tasks to perform that no man or angel could achieve. The Father justifies (verse 7), the Son acts as mediator (verse 6), the Spirit regenerates (verse 5). Not One can forego His responsibility without everything failing; each One has definite pledges to fulfil. Therefore the Three are emphasized alike, though the First Person is the director, the Second Person, the agent, the Third Person, the dispenser. For God is one. Compare verse 8, ". . . . they who have believed God."

2 Timothy thrills with expectant faith, though martyrdom had become imminent for the writer. But even in an epistle like this, apologetic

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[10] Robertson.

testimony does not seem lacking. 1:9-10, for instance, will supplement Titus because it witnesses to the divine intervention (ἐπιφάνεια) of Christ and attendant success. Verse 9 connects salvation with God as One who has called believers according to premundane grace, something given saints in Christ Jesus before time began.[11] Such amazing grace as that has been manifested through the ἐπιφάνεια of Christ the Savior, verse 10, for thereby He "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (A. S. V.). Docetism is probably refuted through use of the term, ἐπιφάνεια, employed in every other place for the glorious advent, 4:1, 8; 1 Timothy 6:14, etc. Just as divine and real as the Second Coming will be, so was the First. The Second with all its accomplishment may not be esteemed more effectual than the First, although the latter is characterized by extreme humiliation. For proof of the apologetic background here, note particularly verse 13 ff.

2:11-13, introduced by the Pastorals' phrase, "Faithful is the saying," teaches how the elect will obtain salvation with eternal glory, verse 10,[12] namely, through union with Christ. Verse 11 will signify the death imputed to everyone accepting Messiah, whereby he partakes of the benefits amassed by the cross death of Christ.[13] On this basis resurrection is assured believers.[14] While verse 11 expounds salvation by grace, the next statement (verse 12) is best understood as an allusion to gain and loss of reward for service. That verse 12 cannot mean in the present context absence or loss of salvation (cf. "deny" in Matt. 10:33)

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[11] Robertson.
[12] Fausset.
[13] Robertson.
[14] Harrison.

is evident from the thirteenth verse following. For verse 13 begins with an equally strong term, ἀπιστοῦμεν, which in Acts 28:24 must connote total lack of faith. In spite of Christians' unbelief, then, it is maintained here that Christ abides faithful. Therefore verse 12 has reference to Christians' denial (Luke 22:34) and Messiah's denying to them the blessed things of His favor or fellowship. So verse 13 will inculcate the saint's perseverance through divine grace. Docetic thought has been confuted again, it seems, because emphasis is laid on the supreme value of Christ's incarnation and death. That essential truth could never be founded upon unreality or pretence. Just as real as a believer's death unto sin and coming resurrection must be Christ in His death, rising, and glory. Observe the apologetic trend throughout succeeding verses of the chapter, especially verses 17-18.

In 3:14-17 the apostle exhorts young Timothy to remain faithful to his instructors and instruction, wisely laying most stress on the Scriptures. Whereas verse 15 denominates the Old Testament ἱερὰ γράμματα "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," the sixteenth verse has expanded the scope of Christological revelation to include doubtless the New Testament thus far written (as well as the few books not yet composed, Fausset). From verse 15 it may be seen that the direction and destination of the wisdom furnished by Scripture is man's very salvation, which learning is appropriated solely by faith in Christ.[15] If the Old Testament has been described as Christocentric and soteriological, how much more the

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[15] Ellicott.

New Testament! But could the latter then be designated "inspired of God" and "profitable" (verse 16, A. S. V.), were it Docetic in its Christology? Instead of being ὠφέλιμος, the New Testament would rightly fall under the condemnation of heretical works, ἀνωφελής, Titus 3:9 (see the verse preceding for the same root once more). Instead of deserving the unique title, θεόπνευστος, it should be called "Jewish fables and commandments of men," Titus 1:14, as in agreement with human wisdom.[16] Compare 2 Timothy 3:7, 13, etc.

Lastly, 4:1, 8 concerns the judgmental work of Christ at His return (ἐπιφάνεια, a key word for the book). Compare verses 17-18. By the former statement, verse 1, Paul has specified a judgment for living and dead, that is, "the last judgment"[17] from which Christians are exempt,[18] John 5:24. And by the latter, he has pointed out the believers' hour of judgment for service rendered, 1 Corinthians 3:13 ff., 2 Corinthians 5:10. This will come before the final judgment, Revelation 20. The author's final Christological allusion bears upon Docetism, particularly verse 1. For he is showing that man's judge will be no other than "Christ Jesus" (A. S. V.), the exalted One who once suffered a cross death, followed by resurrection. Compare Acts 17:31. That one is to appear on earth again, and set up His kingdom, according to verse 1. Therefore if His first coming were no reality, the second advent in its intimate relations with earth would no doubt be unreal likewise, on Docetic grounds. Yet such a thought may not be entertained, because an

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[16] Robertson.
[17] Huther.
[18] Harrison.

eternal kingdom is involved. Heresy, of course, stubbornly resisted the truth proclaimed, verses 2-4 (notice "fables," verse 4, one more time). Thus have the Pastorals borne constant witness against an incipient Docetism, a product of gnostic speculation.

Chapter X

GNOSTIC ERROR COMBATTED BY MARK AND HEBREWS

2 Peter 1:15 seemed to promise another testimony from the aged Peter. Therefore Bigg was led to conclude: "Certainly no document would redeem the apostle's promise so well as a gospel; and if a gospel is meant, the reference can hardly be to any other than that of St. Mark." In consequence, a dictum which many would accept, namely: "One of the clearest results of modern critical study of the Gospels is the early date of Mark's Gospel,"[1] need not be received without question. Greater evidence than modern theory will be afforded doubtless by 2 Peter. Besides, no less an authority than Swete expresses his judgment in similar fashion:

> "The request for a written record of St. Peter's teaching would naturally be made soon after the Apostle's death, while the Church was still keenly conscious of its loss. Thus we are led to think of A. D. 70 as a probable limit of time, and this conclusion is to some extent confirmed by the internal evidence of the Gospel. The freshness of its colouring, the simplicity of its teaching, the absence of any indication that Jerusalem had already fallen when it was written seem to point to a date earlier than the summer of A. D. 70."[2]

One more volume also appears to have been written near, and yet before, the overthrow of Jerusalem. Concerning Hebrews one scholar has summed up pertinent evidence, only to decide: "There is left only the years of 67 to 69 A. D. as probable or even possible."[3] For the sake of historical continuity, then, if not chronological order (something impossible to

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[1] Robertson.
[2] *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. xl.
[3] Robertson.

determine absolutely), it may prove best for Mark to be examined first, as this another series in New Testament literature is given attention.

The main question in scrutiny of one of the Synoptics is its relationship to the others.[4] Probably Westcott has furnished the classic appreciation for Mark:

> "In substance and style and treatment the Gospel of St. Mark is essentially a transcript from life. The course and issue of facts are imaged in it with the clearest outline. If all other arguments against the mythic origin of the Evangelic narratives were wanting, this vivid and simple record, stamped with the most distinct impress of independence and originality, totally unconnected with the symbolism of the Old Dispensation, totally independent of the deeper reasonings of the New, would be sufficient to refute a theory subversive of all faith in history. . . . The picture of the sovereign power of Christ battling with evil among men swayed to and fro by tumultous passions is still needful, though we may turn to St. Matthew and St. John for the ancient types or deeper mysteries of Christianity or find in St. Luke its inmost connexion with the unchanging heart of man."[5]

Bishop Westcott intimates in his critique a possible apologetic value for Mark, namely, its objectivity with respect to the gospel narrative. From that viewpoint probably the key word for Mark would be εὐαγγέλιον, occurring seven or eight times (the latter, if 16:15 is accepted as genuine). Romans has employed the term nine times, but Mark will come second in New Testament usage of the word (1 and 2 Corinthians also have eight references). The one other Gospel to contain this expression is Matthew, which uses it four times (none identically like the cases in Mark). Luke is replete with the verbal form derived from the same root.

Anz, it was reported earlier, deemed soteriology the central doctrine of Gnosticism. To the Gnostic, of course, salvation always took the form

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[4] Gould.

[5] Quoted by Swete, op. cit., p. cxx.

of a myth, a history of bygone events, an allegory or figure, rather than a historical, personal experience here and now. For the heresy may be classified with mystical religions. It is obvious how Mark could answer such an error in soteriological dogma. But that the book actually does intend to refute heretical teaching, perhaps no one can prove beyond the shadow of doubt. On internal grounds, nevertheless, its discriminating use of the key word and the apologetic significance visible in all the other Gospels will readily suggest a like meaning again.

1:1 itself presents the first use of εὐαγγέλιον. This opening verse may serve as a superscription for the whole book (and one written by the author). But whatever be decided about the genuineness of the verse, "gospel" was not employed in the apostolic age to designate a writing.[6] The New Testament has restricted εὐαγγέλιον to a single meaning: the good news about Christ, or His kingdom, or the salvation accomplished by Him.[7] Expositors debate the reference of Ἀρχή, yet every one should agree that the verse signifies from the very beginning of Mark the distinctive character of this work. Mark does not omit the background provided by Matthew, Luke, and John, simply because it may be "the earliest form of the evangelical tradition." On the contrary, a particular (soteriological) aim has apparently dominated the second Gospel, namely, marshalling of all the irrefutable facts of Messiah's advent. Often it has been asserted that Mark abbreviates the incarnation story. The truth of the matter, however, will rather lie in the fact that every narrative, from 1:16 on, is remarkable for its graphic clarity

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[6] Zahn.

[7] Gould.

and fulness of detail (which must certainly not be essential). So the brevity in 1:1-15, as well as the more elaborate testimony throughout the remainder of the book, possibly intimates faithfulness to a purpose, the actual one declared in 1:1.[8] After all, the other Gospels have commenced their witness from individual standpoints: Matthew from the ancestry of Christ as incarnate, Luke from the birth of His Forerunner, John from eternity. And each one's introduction is appropriate to the content of the volume following. Observe the important material selected for 1:2-15; the ministry of John, verses 2-8; his baptism of Christ, 9-11; the temptation of Messiah, 12-13; His message in the Galilean tour, 14-15. John's service indicated the precise connection of Messiah with the past; baptism of Christ, His formal introduction to the soteriological task; temptation, His fitness for the endeavor; and the message, His one design. A "vivid and simple record" intending to combat mysticism with true soteriology need not be expected to mention genealogies, infancy details, and philosophy, like other Gospels. Only a compact preface introductory to the public ministry of Christ would be suitable. Incidentally, "gospel of Jesus Christ" is not found elsewhere; yet compare the common phrase "gospel of Christ," Romans 15:19, and 2 Thessalonians 1:8, "gospel of our Lord Jesus" (A. S. V.). Also see Philippians 4:15, Hebrews 6:1 for "beginning."

Εὐαγγέλιον occurs twice again in the prefatory verses, 1:1-15, namely, in verses 14 and 15. 1:14 (cf. verses 4, 7, Matt. 4:23) has also employed κηρύσσω, another key word of Mark. The expression,

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[8] Zahn.

"the gospel of God" (A. S. V.), is frequently seen in the New Testament, although not any more in the Gospels. Τοῦ θεοῦ has been explained as subjective genitive in the sense that God originated the gospel. A more inclusive view, however, can be advocated. Consequently Sanday and Headlam aver:

> "It is probably a mistake. . . . to restrict the force of the gen. to one particular aspect ('the gospel of which God is the author,' or 'of which Christ is the subject' [as in Mark 1:1]): all aspects are included in which the Gospel is in any way related to God and Christ."[9]

As noted above, verse 14 has shown that Christ had but one aim during His Galilean ministry, the gospel's proclamation. Nothing else mattered as much, everything was wrought so as to contribute toward this goal. Although the Forerunner was imprisoned and thereby His own cause repudiated, Messiah was not deterred from a gracious preaching of the gospel. To be sure, the news did not represent just His own word, but that of the Father. God in heaven wanted His Son to announce to man the glad tidings of salvation. Whereas the Forerunner John had been commissioned with a rather negative message, that of repentance (verse 4), to be delivered in the wilderness, Jesus Christ was sent to the populous areas of Galilee with a positive, joyful note (nevertheless recall μετανοεῖτε, verse 15). The Judaean work performed by Christ is not described in Mark at all, any more than in the other Synoptists. Remember John 21:25. Evidently it seemed best to start the recital of Messiah's testimony with the arrest experienced by John, as conclusive proof that Jews and Gentiles had soon disclosed their animosity for God and free salvation (intimating too that

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[9] Romans, I. C. C., p. 5.

Christ Himself would fare no better than the Baptist, God's greatest prophet, verse 2, Luke 7:28).

In 1:15 just the simple phrase, "the gospel," is written. But this verse becomes important since it has defined the fourfold reference of εὐαγγέλιον. Verse 15, whether beginning with καὶ λέγων or ὅτι (a debated textual problem), is introduced by recitative ὅτι , as frequently in Mark. Compare verse 37.[10] Now follows the substance of the new proclamation. First it has displayed relations with the past (see verses 2-8, already): "The time is fulfilled." According to Robertson:

> "It is a significant fact that John looks backward to the promise of the coming of the Messiah and signalizes the fulfilment as near at hand (perfect passive indicative). It is like Paul's fulness of time (*plērōma tou chronou*) in Galatians 4:4 and fulness of the times (*plērōma tōn kairōn*) in Ephesians 1:10 when he employs the word *kairos*, opportunity or crisis as here in Mark rather than the more general term *chronos*."[11]

It was not so much with regard to Galilee that the startling words were spoken, as in reference to the world and humanity considered as a whole.[12] Compare 13:30-33 for the connotation of καιρός . Secondly, the evangel is linked with God and His dominion: "The kingdom of God is at hand." Gould has judged aright:

> "This message assumes evidently the existence of the idea of a kingdom of God among the Jews as a familiar thought. The announcement is, that this expected kingdom is at hand. Jesus does not announce a new fact, nor does he enter here upon any exposition of the nature of the kingdom. . . . but simply announces the expected kingdom."[13]

Ἤγγικεν , another perfect passive indicative, will parallel Πεπλήρωται, ahead. Notice that the two verbs are set down first in their individual

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[10] Swete.

[11] *Word Pictures in the N. T.*, *in loc.*

[12] Swete.

[13] *St. Mark*, I. C. C., *in loc.*

clauses, as the most important part of the message (similarly with the last two verbs in the verse). In the third place, the gospel pertains to sin: "Repent ye." Μετανοεῖτε, a present imperative, must denote continuous action. It seems to emphasize the negative side of accepting salvation, namely, "that sense of sin which leads the sinner to flee from the wrath to come, to look for relief only from above, and eagerly to fall in with the provided remedy."[14] Human bondage to sin is involved in the necessity for a universal command like this. Fourthly, Christ's gospel demands faith: "Believe in the gospel" (A. S. V.). Like μετανοεῖτε , πιστεύετε is also present imperative. It will point to the positive side of receiving deliverance, that is, trusting to the salvation provided with the kingdom. In summary: Godward the evangel denotes a climax in divine intervention and a future establishment of God's rule over earth; manward, an acknowledging of sin and a welcome of God's soteriological plan.

8:35, the next allusion to τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, has mentioned σώζω in the same verse. After revealing first the woe that He had to endure, verse 31, Messiah declares that followers of His must be content with the same lot, if they would ever become true disciples, verse 34 ff. The immediate reference of verse 35 is doubtless to the alternative of martyrdom or apostasy; but certainly the words admit of wider application.[15] Once more the mystic vagaries of heresy are demonstrated to be ineffective for salvation, as a clear call for sacrifice issues. Mark alone has added the expression τὸ εὐαγγέλιον; compare the

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[14] Brown.

[15] Swete.

following verse 38 (paralleled by Luke 9:26), "ashamed of me and of my words," negative phraseology in conjunction with the positive one in the thirty-fifth verse. By itself "the gospel" can signify news about Christ, 1:15. But here and at 10:29, for more emphasis on the personality included, Messiah is specified by Himself prior to the evangel.

Ample reward has been promised those who sacrifice for Christ's sake and the gospel's, 10:29. While 8:35 assured the yielded disciple of his salvation, 10:29 goes beyond that in order to guarantee blessing in the present, too. The privation contemplated embraces all the material possessions related to the home, relatives, and property; the surrender of life is not in view.[16] Though only Peter voiced his mind, verse 28, Christ has addressed the band. For the ready spokesman must have interpreted their thought, one commentator observes. When ἐμοῦ and τοῦ εὐαγγελίου are arrayed beside one another as two chief motives for sacrifice, it can be implied that the gospel possesses no less objective reality than the person of Christ.

Mark's account of the Olivet discourse has also employed the key word, "gospel," See Matthew 24:14, Mark 16:15. 13:10 declares a logical necessity from the divine viewpoint (δεῖ , cf. verse 7), namely, evangelization of all the nations "first"--that is, before the Second Advent, verse 26 ff. This imperative upon God is to be explained from passages like 1:15, 10:45, 14:24. Salvation is a world-wide objective of God's, therefore all the world ought to have opportunity to hear the glad news thereof, before judgment fall heavily. During the apostolic

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[16] Swete.

era the world then known was evangelized, Colossians 1:6, 23.[17] In consequence it need not be informed again, unless God is pleased to cover the earth thus one more time, ere Christ return. That He probably will do so afresh may be based upon a recognized principle of His gracious conduct: "God never sends judgment without previous warning."[18] Note the close connection between this message and the Holy Spirit's ministry, verse 11. Swete has drawn the proper conclusion from verse 10:

> "The work which began in Galilee with the personal Ministry of the Lord (i. 14 ἦλθεν. . . . κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, cf. Heb. ii. 3 ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου) was to be carried forward by the Apostolic ministry to the ever-expanding confines of the habitable world (Mt. ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ); and the execution of this purpose was perhaps the chief condition of the final issue being reached. The disclosure of this fact could not but be stimulating to the early preachers of the Gospel; they felt that it was in some sense within their power to hasten the end by extending the kingdom (2 Pet. iii. 12 σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν)."[19]

14:9, the last use of εὐαγγέλιον unless 16:15 is genuine, opens with the formula already noted in 10:29: "Verily I say unto you." By so much the greatest solemnity is expressed. Indeed, "The form ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν is characteristic of Him who is ὁ Ἀμήν (Apoc. iii. 14)," one expositor judges. The *Amen* of the Gospels is to be distinguished sharply from Old Testament usage, inasmuch as it will affirm what comes afterwards, not what has just been said.[20] Verse 9, then, has solemnly stated how the woman's anointing of Christ in Bethany will not be forgotten, but on the contrary be remembered and talked of throughout the world for a lasting memorial to her devotion. Along with the

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[17] Robertson.

[18] Brown.

[19] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

[20] Swete.

gospel that contains witness to the devotedness of Messiah whereby He secured man his salvation, testimony will be borne to this woman's love (a response to His first loving her). This is an illustration of how Christ can fulfil His amazing promise in 10:29-30. Not only does the evangel possess objective truth, but likewise the affection for the Savior which it begets. The woman's good is magnified by contrast with perfidy in Judas, verses 10-11.

If Romans summarizes and teaches New Testament soteriology to the Gentile, Hebrews has achieved the same goal for the Jew. Romans was not addressed to a congregation overcome or enmeshed in sin, but Hebrews was. Furthermore, so compelling are its lines, Westcott himself will admit:

> "No work in which I have ever been allowed to spend many years of continuous labor has had for me the same intense human interest as the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews. If this feeling, which must shew itself in what I have written, moves others to work upon the book with frank and confident reverence, to listen to the voice which speaks to us 'to-day' from its pages, to bring to the doubts, the controversies, the apparent losses, which distress us, the spirit of absolute self-surrender to our King-priest, the living and glorified Christ, which it inspires, my end will be fully gained."[21]

The general theme of this epistle has been aptly worded: the finality of Christianity. That granted, a key word for the volume would be κρείττων, which appears thirteen times in all. Studious examination of "better" things in the book may disclose another apologetic opposed to gnostic soteriological dogma.

1:4, the first occurrence of κρείττων, compares Messiah with

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[21] The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. ix.

the angels. The idea in "better," let it be clear from the start, is that of superiority in advantage, the fundamental thought being power and not goodness (ἀμείνων and ἄριστος are not found in the New Testament, Westcott). Christ became (A. S. V., γενόμενος) greater than angelic powers, yet only with respect to His incarnation. For the preceding verses have expounded His deity, as well as His true humanity whereby He, the God-man, accomplished purification of sins (A. S. V.). Ὄνομα refers primarily to the name of "Son" (verse 2); but also, as the quotations which follow verify, it will include the language generally used in Scripture of the coming Messiah.[22] Angels are powerful; Christ, however, is superior to them in worth and power. Rendall has well described the heretical situation which chapters 1 and 2 combat by this unusual exaltation of the Son:

> "The part played by angels in the older revelation (ii. 2) furnishes an occasion for this studied antithesis between the Son's position and theirs; but the fulness with which it is worked out indicates the existence in the Hebrew church of the same heretical tendencies, which called forth the warnings of St. Paul in the case of the Colossian church. . . . the attempt had already begun within the Christian church to bridge the interval between God and man by a hierarchy of angelic mediators, which found its full development at a later time in Gnosticism. Against this multitude of angelic mediators the same doctrine is set up in both Epistles, viz. the union in the Person of the Son of the highest heavenly exaltation, and the most perfect humanity."[23]

The Hebrews' reverence for angels, even as believers, may explain in part the surprising inroads that the gnostic heresy, with its speculation about angels, finally made in the church.[24]

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[22] Wickham.

[23] *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, *in loc*.

[24] Harrison.

A second comparison is drawn by chapter 3, however not introduced with κρείττων. When Moses and Christ are viewed at the same time, most discriminating language has been chosen, 3:1 ff. For Moses looms high above others in the Old Testament economy inaugurated by God, himself a type of the promised Messiah, Deuteronomy 18:15 ff. First Hebrews 3:2 will point out similarity between the two prophets. Then the third verse can proceed to mention of vast superiority in the New Testament Son, 1:1 ff. Moses' dispensation is not in the least criticized or belittled. Yet the clear-cut difference between Moses and Christ must be shown for the sake of evidence on the need of a new covenant, together with discard of a previous one. Gnostic legalism would thereby lose much prestige. Compare Galatians, the Pastorals, etc. Westcott ably sums up the contrast between Old and New Testament leaders:

> "Moses and Christ are not only distinguished as standing to one another in the relation of an economy to its author; but also in regard to the respective economies which they administered. . . . the Mosaic order pointed forward as preparatory to that which should come after: the Christian order includes the blessings which it proclaims."[25]

Time-honored procedure in divine service, then, could no longer be accounted superior to worship of Christ, the new and final mediator.

After scrutiny of the law mediator, the writer is prepared to contrast the law itself with Messiah's (first) advent, 7:19. Chapters intervening between 3:6 and 7:19 had skilfully laid a foundation for the numerous comparisons now to be enunciated in the latter part of this homily. Bruce has perceived the train of thought in chapter 7:

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[25] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

> "In short, the text from the Psalm [see verse 17] is to our author a bell, which with solemn tones rings out the old order of things, and at the same moment rings in the new. . . . 'A BETTER HOPE, THROUGH WHICH WE DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD.' If one were to attempt by typography to indicate the great, salient thoughts of this Epistle, these words would certainly have to be printed in capitals. They contain the dogmatic centre of the Epistle."[26]

In the Old Testament will be found the limitation and even some prohibition of drawing nigh (Vaughan,[27] cf. 9:6 ff.); in the New, "better hope," that is, unlimited access (ἐγγίζομεν, present tense). The unique significance of "hope" has been elucidated by 6:18-20,[28] where ἐλπίς must however connote "object of hope,"[29] namely, Jesus as Forerunner. Man's only hope for salvation lies in the Messiah, not in the law, verse 11 ff. Westcott is careful to observe the differentiation between Paul's use of "law" and that of Hebrews:

> "For St. Paul the Law is a code of moral ordinances: for the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews it is a scheme of typical provisions for atonement. For the one it is a crushing burden: for the other it is a welcome if imperfect source of consolation. . . . We must indeed regard the Law under these two distinct aspects, in order that we may fully appreciate its character and its office. We must, that is, regard it on the one side as a body of commandments imposed upon man's obedience; and we must regard it on the other side as a system of ritual provided by God's mercy. . . . Each view when carefully studied reveals the failure of the Law to satisfy man's needs, and so shews its necessary transitoriness."[30]

From both sides, then, whether the law be surveyed in its convicting character or sacramental office, it can never satisfy the hope of salvation from sin as does Christianity.

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[26] The Epistle to the Hebrews, in loc.
[27] Quoted by Bruce, op. cit., p. 272.
[28] Robertson.
[29] Fausset.
[30] Op. cit., p. lii.

7:22, in addition, compares old (8:13) and new covenants, denominating the latter κρείττων. Rendall has explicated the adjective simply: "one more effectual for its purpose." Compare verse 19. What gains this superiority for the new covenant? Our author will answer the question himself, because he has pointed here to the agreement's surety, Jesus. It is He who prevents the new covenant also from becoming a failure.[31] The ἅπαξ λεγόμενον ἔγγυος, "surety," or guarantor, must be distinguished from just "mediator" (8:6). For it will convey the specialized idea: one who intervenes in a covenant to the extent of offering security to each for the performance by the other.[32] Notice the meaningful tense of γέγονεν. Whereas verse 19 had revealed the subjective angle to a superiority in Christian truth over the law, verse 22 stresses the objective side. Ἰησοῦς, the human name, standing emphatically at the end, was employed because incarnation brought about the covenant and its guarantee.[33] But observe that the work of Christ has not been made the reason for the new covenant's greatness. On the contrary, κατὰ τοσοῦτο indicates that "the added solemnity of God's oath is the measure of the greater perfection of the Covenant which it introduced."[34] God alone originated this unconditional, eternal agreement; thus legalism is refuted anew.

In 8:6 the fact of a better covenant will infer enactment upon better promises. The old agreement possessed such pledges of union with God as the Mosaic code and sacrificial system, while the new covenant

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[31] Bruce.
[32] Wickham.
[33] Westcott.
[34] Wickham.

advances beyond both law and ritual by promising heart obedience for every one (accepting Christ) and complete forgiveness, verse 8 ff. Under the old covenant failure occurred, bringing censure in its wake. But success will attend the new order, so effective are its promises, verses 11-12. Fausset notes the surprising connection of νενομοθέτηται ("furnish with law," Robertson) and a grace accord. For previous reference to the new covenant see Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25, 2 Corinthians 3:6. Incidentally, Hebrews 8:6, like 7:22, has contrasted Levitical priesthood with that of Messiah, as well as the two covenants involved. How, then, does the manifold allusion of chapters 3 ff. to Old Testament soteriology relate to Gnosticism? Mellone (whose interpretation was cited earlier) has demonstrated that gnostic soteriology concerned itself, like all mystic sects, with holy rites and formulas, acts of initiation and dedication, all those things which men call sacraments. Jewish Gnostics, accordingly, would cling the more to ritualism of Temple worship, instead of recognizing how Christ superseded Levitical practice as the antitype. God's Spirit, knowing that the Temple would soon be destroyed and that the readers were sadly failing to develop in knowledge of Christ despite many years' instruction (5:11 ff.), had to send forth this testimony against Judaism as something now succeeded by Christianity. The epistle's vibrant appeal was urgently needed, so as to convince every Hebrew Christian of his entrance into a new dispensation and the heresy of gnostic soteriological teaching. Compare the errors in a Philo, whose Judaism had been influenced by contemporary thought.

Animal sacrifices and Messiah's are compared in 9:23. Compare 10:4 ff. Bruce has discerned the argument no doubt:

> "From this extensive use of blood under the law [verse 22] an inference is drawn as to the probability of its use under the new covenant (ver. 23). If, it be argued, the cosmic tabernacle, with all that belonged to it, required to be purified by the blood of victims slain for that end, it stands to reason that the heavenly things of which these were the rude emblems should have their sacrifices also, only better than the legal ones. . . . Wherever there is a shadow there must be a body that casts it. The sacrifices of the law were shadows [10:1] of something better of the same kind, of a rare, perfect sacrifice offered for the same purpose, purification of sin. . . . that the new covenant sacrifice (for though the plural is used in ver. 23 to suit the parallelism of thought, there is and can be only one sacrifice), Christ Himself, is better than any sacrifice under the law, better than all of them put together, the best conceivable, it being absolutely impossible to imagine any quality of excellence not found in the sacrifice Christ made of Himself through an eternal spirit."[35]

Verse 23 deals not merely with the superior efficacy of Messiah's blood for salvation, verse 11 ff., but with the crisis presented by introducing believers into the heavenly sanctuary. Even that exalted fellowship with God is cared for by the sacrifice of Christ, 4:14-16, 6:18-20, 10:19 ff. The Christian religion must possess an incomparable foundation, however verse 23 be understood.

10:34 will afford a debated textual problem. American Standard Version has translated it: ". . . . knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one," yet admits in the footnote: "Many ancient authorities read ye have your own selves for a better possession." Probably the latter rendering or reading is to be preferred. Then Rendall has determined the sense accurately:

> "The passage compares the value of themselves, i. e. their true living selves, with worldly possessions, just as our Lord says (Luke ix. 25), 'What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit his own self?'"[36]

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[35] Op. cit., in loc.
[36] Op. cit., in loc.

Judaism promised earthly blessing for obedience, whereas Christianity may entail financial loss. Notwithstanding deprivation of everything material, the author witnesses, believers are not failing to gain a blessing, and that, one superior to temporal favor. By so much the Christian faith can become one's most cherished possession. Westcott would interpret the verse thus:

> "Stripped of their goods the Christians learned better than before that their true self remained unchangeable. That was not marred but purified. . . . This possession they had so that they could never lose it. By the use of the word γινώσκοντες, as distinguished from εἰδότες (Eph. vi. 8 f.; Rom. v. 3; vi. 9 &c.), the writer implies that the knowledge was realised through the trial: through that the confessors came to know the value of their faith."[37]

Notice that verse 35 ff. encourages by pointing out nearness of the Advent and the reward accompanying. How objective is this soteriological doctrine!

The patriarchs' fatherland (πατρίδα, verse 14) and the city of heavenly building (verse 16) are also contrasted by the writer, 11:16. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob desire (note the present tense, indicating that the record exists in Scripture, Rendall) the latter. Had they wished for the other, it would have been possible to return thither, verse 15. Significantly enough, the city to come and the land of promise (verse 9) have not been compared. Certainly Abraham will yet receive the fulfilment of God's pledge, namely, to give him the land covenanted of old. But in addition, the patriarchs longed for fellowship with God in His city (Rev. 21:3), which will one day be "with men," Revelation 21:24 ff. Expectation of such communion led the fathers to endure privation in their new land, verses 9-10. Heavenly Jerusalem, then, may be called a

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[37] _Op. cit._, _in loc._

"fatherland" (verse 16 does so by implication) only in the sense that the Father dwells there and they may fellowship with Him. He lives with them, yet it is not said that they dwell with Him. One commentator has recorded the three distinct conceptions of πόλις widely current in the apostolic age, because they might color the usage here:

> "It is the seat of a Divine Presence which carries with it the promise of the fulfilment of a divine counsel in the fellowship of man with God. It is a community in which each citizen is endowed with the completest privileges and charged with the fullest responsibility for the general welfare. It is a world-wide organisation embracing in a communion of the largest hope 'all thinking things, all objects of all thought.'"[38]

While Old Testament saints were not perfected, New Testament men of God are; therefore it is declared that the latter number gain "some better thing" than did the former, 11:40. Compare 10:14. Pre-Christian believers enjoyed blessing, as chapter 11 has detailed. But they "received not the promise," 11:39. "The Messianic promise they did not live to see (11:13), though they had individual special promises fulfilled as already shown (11:33), " Robertson observes. From 12:23, however, one would judge that they are now perfected since the cross with New Jerusalem their location.[39] Fausset has expounded the force of the present contrast:

> "Though the Old Testament worthies attained such eminence by faith, they are not above us in privileges, but the reverse. It is not we who are perfected with them, but they with us. They waited for His coming: we enjoy Him, having come (ch. i. 1; ii. 3). Christ's death, the means of perfecting what the Jewish law could not, was reserved for our time. Compare chapter xii. 2, 'perfecter (Greek) of our faith.'"[40]

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[38] Westcott, op. cit., p. 389.
[39] Griffith Thomas.
[40] Critical and Experimental Commentary, in loc.

Τελειόω, of course, means "'to put into their final, complete condition': in what respect, depends on the context."[41] Notice, too, that περὶ ἡμῶν will suggest the translation "concerning us" (A. S. V.), not "for us" (A. V.) in the sense of benefit. So these words cannot affirm that God provided some better thing for us than He did for the fathers,[42] although we have been perfected first.

The final mention of Christian superiority appears in 12:24, when the Mediator's blood of sprinkling is contrasted with Abel (cf. A. S. V. margin). This section, closing solemnly the main argument of the epistle, has described New Jerusalem with climactic power, the last of whose features is naught other than Messiah's blood. Harrison fully appreciates the passage, since he has linked it closely with 11:4, the one other reference to Abel in Hebrews. Perhaps Wickham will offer the most helpful explanation of the latter verse:

> "*being dead yet speaketh*; i. e. by the example of his faith and its reward, though they caused his death, he still has a voice to exhort and encourage. The difficult expression seems to be suggested (1) by the words of Genesis iv. 10, 'the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground,' which are recalled again in this Epistle in chapter xii. 24. . . . (2) by the fact that Abel is treated as the first Martyr. Cp. Matt. xxiii. 35."[43]

12:24, consequently, must signify that Abel exhorts men to accept the saving grace of God by faith, yet Christ and His blood rise superior to him because they actually make salvation possible, Abel's deliverance included. Even the first martyr and his notable sacrifice are overshadowed

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[41] Wickham.

[42] Edwards.

[43] *Westminster Commentaries*, *in loc.*

in value by the atoning blood of Calvary. Compare 9:23. Now a comparison is being supplied between Old and New Testament offerings, as 11:40 paralleled the Old and the New Testament saints. Time and again the author has proved both the objectivity and the pre-eminence of Messianic soteriology.

Chapter XI

FINAL TESTIMONY CONTRARY TO GNOSTICISM

The remaining volumes of the New Testament should be studied together, particularly in order to discern nascent heresy. For each one with quite unmistakeable language singles out enemies to the truth, so dangerous had error become. Perhaps the earliest book among the last ones written is Jude. Mayor, for instance, has decided about its date:

> "It has been argued that this epistle must have been written before 70, or it would have contained some reference to the destruction of Jerusalem among the other notable judgments of God. We may grant that this is what we should have expected, if the letter were written shortly afterwards, though even then it is a possible view that a patriotic Jew might shrink from any further allusion to so terrible a subject, beyond the reference to the destruction in the wilderness (v. 5); but this difficulty is lessened if we suppose the date of the Epistle to be nearer 80 than 70."[1]

Next to be produced may have been the Fourth Gospel. Its precise date cannot be determined with any certainty. But conservative scholars will agree with Plummer, when he infers:

> "There are indications in the Gospel itself that it was written late in the author's life-time. . . . S. John may have lived almost if not quite to the end of the century; therefore from A. D. 80 to 95 would seem to be the period within which it is probable that the Gospel was published."[2]

Some believe that the epistles of John follow the Gospel, possibly in the order now observed. To be sure, the letters do not contain any direct allusion to the time or the place at which they were finished. Yet 2 and

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[1] The Ep. of St. Jude and the Sec. Ep. of St. Peter, p. clv.
[2] Cambridge Greek Testament, in loc., pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

3 John appear to belong to the same time of the apostle's life as 1 John; and 1 John doubtless presupposes in those for whom it was written a familiarity with the characteristic verities which have been preserved in the Fourth Gospel.[3] Lastly, Revelation is to be considered. There are two chief theories regarding the date, namely, the Neronic and the Domitianic.[4] Swete has urged the latter, maintaining:

> "With all due deference, therefore, to the great authority of Westcott, Lightfoot, and Hort, and of the foreign scholars who have supported an earlier date, adhesion has been given in this edition to the view that the Apocalypse, at least in its present form, belongs, as Irenaeus believed, to the reign of Domitian and to the last years of that reign (90-96). This date appears to be consistent with the general character and purpose of the book."[5]

Thus the Apocalypse would close New Testament revelation from a chronological standpoint.

The key word in Jude is expressed by three different forms: ἀσέβεια, ἀσεβέω, and ἀσεβής. Verse 4, containing ἀσεβεῖς, will furnish the very occasion for Jude's appearance. In verse 3 the design of the letter was set forth, which verse 4 complements by an explanatory statement (note its γάρ). This latter verse has been interpreted in a previous chapter, when 2 Peter (a related epistle) was under consideration. Evidently the verse signifies that heretical men were denying Christ and redemptive grace through unrestrained lasciviousness. Antinomianism has already been named as one characteristic of Gnosticism. Notice the several features in verse 4. Παρεισεδύησαν, a ἅπαξ λεγόμενον, will connote "to slip in secretly as if by a side door."[6] These apostates had to use

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[3] Westcott.
[4] Robertson.
[5] *The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. civ.
[6] Robertson.

stealth in entering the assemblies. According to Mayor, τινες ἄνθρωποι often has a contemptuous signification. With respect to the phrase "they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation" (A. S. V.), Alleman judges: some scholars take this as a reference to 2 Peter, but it is more likely a reference to the Old Testament and its divine condemnation for the ungodly. Such a probability is substantiated by the allusions to follow, which are gleaned from Old Testament sources.[7] Jude has not yet revealed what the particular κρίμα will be; however it is described in the next verse (con. Bigg, who supposes that δέ must be adversative. It is also common as a transitional or continuative particle, verse 14). That is to say, divine punishment in general has been meant, a frequent thought in the book, verses 6, 9, 15.

Verse 15, the second allusion to the godless employing the key word, repeats the root four times, so as to produce unusual emphasis. The author is citing prophecy from Enoch, the first prophet (verse 14), with regard to Advent and judgment. So Fausset will show: "His reference was not to the antediluvians alone, but to *all* the ungodly (*v*.15). His prophecy applied primarily to the flood, ultimately to the final judgment."[8] Two facts are given by verse 15: the objective and the subjective side of judgment to come. Also the writer makes plain that words and deeds alike will be weighed. See verse 8 ff., Colossians 3:17. Πᾶς is another word stressed here, because reiterated four times too. One expositor has sensed the idea behind verses 14-16 in very able fashion:

> "From the first, prophecy hastened towards it consummation. The earliest prophecies of the Redeemer dwell on His second

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[7] Harrison.

[8] *Critical and Experimental Commentary*, *in loc*.

> coming in glory, rather than His first coming in lowliness (cf. Gen. iii. 15, with Rom. xvi. 20). Enoch, in his translation without death, illustrated that which he all his life preached to the unbelieving world--the Lord's certain coming, and the resurrection of the dead--as the antidote to their sceptical, self-wise confidence in nature's permanence."[9]

Incidentally, the Spirit has sealed the truth of this much from the apocalyptic Book of Enoch, although probably that work, as well as Jude, derived the ancient prophecy from tradition.[10] Compare verse 9. At all events, verse 15 will prove that God's judgment upon license is sure.

Not only was libertinism mentioned by the first seer, but also by the last prophets, namely, "the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ," verse 17 ff. The latter proclaimed that ungodly mockers would arise "in the last time," verse 18 (notice the third and last use of the key word), thus dating their future manifestation. See verse 4 ff., where they are specified as at work in a measure during the apostolic age. Mayor comments that the position of τῶν ἀσεβειῶν is peculiar, and likely intended to give additional stress. Personally he is disposed to take the expression as subjective genitive. Verse 19, which has identified the godless of the preceding statement, may intimate :

> "The false teachers of whom Jude is speaking attached themselves to the rich (vers. 11, 16). But the rich would be in the main the educated. Thus we may see here a 'separation' caused partly by wealth, displaying itself in insolent ostentation at the Agape; partly by social position, rebelling against the authority of officials who were not always men of much worldly consideration; partly by an assumption of intellectual superiority, of 'knowledge.' The same dividing influences were working at Corinth, and amongst those to whom St. James wrote, and sprang naturally out of the constitution of the Church, which was strongly democratic on one side, strongly aristocratic on another. In early days, before the Church was wealthy or educated,

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[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Fausset.

> and before the tradition of her discipline had established itself, a rich Christian, unless he was a very devout man, must have found himself in a very trying position. It was out of this state of things that Gnosticism arose. Gnosticism was the revolt of the well-to-do half-educated bourgeois class."[11]

Jude deserves careful study, more than can be given in an outline piece of research like the present.

The Fourth Gospel, replete with apologetic material, must also be treated in merely outline form. In approaching John, a thoughtful student will agree with Westcott: "It is impossible to pass from the Synoptic Gospels to that of St. John without feeling that the transition involves the passage from one world of thought to another."[12] Besides, the same critic has aptly differentiated all four Gospels, when he links Matthew with Judaism, Mark with factual history, Luke with anthropology, and John with theology proper. No doubt the incarnate Logos may be called the revelation peculiar to John, and the book's prologue (1:1-18) a summary thereof. Furthermore, the ruling idea in John is one of conflict, reminiscent of the everlasting struggle in Persian religion between good and evil, light and darkness. But Zoroastrianism (a leading source for gnostic doctrine) was based on the assumption that two equal and independent powers of good and evil had always existed. John cuts athwart that dogma by witnessing to the eternal Logos, 1:1-4, as well as to wicked unbelief, 1:5-11, and faith, 1:12-18(cf. Godet).

Plummer has fixed upon the significance of verses 1-4, as he records the conclusion:

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[11] International Critical Commentary, in loc.
[12] Int. to the Study of the Gospels, p. 253.

> "The Logos of S. John, therefore, is not 'the thing uttered' (ῥῆμα); nor 'the One spoken of' or promised (ὁ λεγόμενος); nor 'He who speaks the word' (ὁ λέγων); nor a mere attribute of God (as σοφία or νοῦς). But the Logos is the Son of God, existing from all eternity, and manifested in space and time in the Person of Jesus Christ, in whom has been hidden from eternity all that God had to say to man, and who was the living expression of the Nature and Will of God. (Cf. the impersonal designation of Christ in 1 John i. 1.) Human thought had been searching in vain for some means of connecting the finite with the Infinite, of making God intelligible to man and leading man up to God. S. John knew that he possessed the key to the hitherto insoluble enigma. Just as S. Paul declared to the Athenians the 'Unknown God' whom they worshipped, though they knew Him not, so S. John declares to all the Divine Word, who had been so imperfectly understood. He therefore took the phrase which human reason had lighted on in its gropings, stripped it of its philosophical and mythological clothing, fixed it by identifying it with the Person of Christ, and filled it with that fulness of meaning which he himself had derived from Christ's own teaching."[13]

Godet traces the progress of thought in the first four verses accurately, while Robertson esteems them sufficient answer to the Gnostics who denied the humanity of Christ or separated the aeon Christ from the man Jesus. The Gospel of John is the most complete answer to Gnosticism in its manifold forms; and yet, strangely enough, this work became the writing most used by Gnostics.[14] Instead of discussing verses 1-4 at length, it will suffice to quote Godet's words:

> "The allusion to the beginning of Genesis in the first verses of our Gospel is obvious at a glance. But John does not stop at that beginning which Moses made the point of departure. He ascends still higher. Why so? Because his aim is more remote than his predecessor's. To reach further, one must start higher. The Jewish historian had immediately in view only the development of the theocracy; the evangelist's aim is the second creation--Redemption. For him the beginning of Moses does not suffice. He must plunge into eternity to find there the agent of the work which he proposes to describe. He starts from the same point as Moses, the ἀρχή, the beginning of the world and of time; but

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[13] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

[14] Westcott.

> instead of proceeding onward, he goes backward. He seeks in God Himself the subject of his history--the Word (ver. 1); having found Him, he takes his place with Him again at the beginning of things (ver. 2), and so again descends the stream of time. He brings before our eyes, first, the act of creation (ver. 3); then the normal and primitive state of humanity (ver. 4); and that while continuing to make the Logos the sole subject of his narrative."[15]

Creation, of course, is mentioned in order to refute the heretical notions that matter always existed, and that angels or aeons had a share in making the world. Perhaps verses 1-4 can be understood as summarizing the whole Messianic revelation of John (which can rightly be compressed into a single word, namely, Logos). Verse 1, emphasizing Christ in His Godhood as eternal Son, the prologue has developed. Verse 2, stressing His divine personality, 1:19-12:50 has unfolded especially. Verse 3, laying emphasis on creatorship, chapters 20 and 21 suggest, because they concern the unique resurrection life. Finally, verse 4 with its stress upon revelatorship 13:1-19:42 will detail, for there He is shown as Paraclete and Lamb.

Godet likewise has analyzed verses 5-11 with skill. According to this authority:

> "The fact of unbelief is indicated summarily in verse 5. Then John relates the extraordinary provision which God made for its prevention, the sending of the forerunner, vv. 6-8. Finally, he describes the fact itself in such a way as to unveil its enormity, verses 9-11."[16]

Since probably nothing better than Godet's analysis of verses 12-18 can be found, it will profit us to quote once more from him.

> "Though the appearing of the Word did not succeed in scattering the darkness of the human race and overcoming the resistance of Israel as a nation, His mission is by no means a failure. On the contrary, it is at this juncture

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[15] Commentary on St. John's Gospel, in loc.

[16] Op. cit., in loc.

> that His relations to humanity become more intimate, and that a *new humanity* appears on the earth, begotten directly of God through the instrumentality of faith (vv. 12 and 13). The *object* of this faith, which has power to create a family of God's children here on earth, is the incarnation of the Word (ver. 14*a*). Extraordinary as this fact is, it is *certain*; for, 1st. He was *beheld* with rapture by eye-witnesses, to the number of whom the author belongs (ver. 14*b*); 2d. He was *pointed out* by the divine herald, whose mission it was to proclaim Him (ver. 15); 3d. He was *proved*, and, as it were, lived on, by the whole church, which, by everything received from this unparalleled being, Jesus Christ, proves that He has the characteristics of the divine Logos (vv. 16-18). Hence the threefold testimony: that of eye-witnesses, that of the official witness, and that of the whole church.
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> This third part of the prologue thus goes to demonstrate the certainty and riches of faith. Verse 18 brings us, through the experience of believers, to that summit from which we gradually descended after verse 1. The church possesses in Jesus that eternal Word,--that Word-God, with whose existence the prologue opened."[17]

Faith and unbelief as opposite poles in human experience accord with the book's ruling thought of conflict, that is, the struggle between good and evil.

Conclusive proof for the apologetic nature of John may be gained from its style. Westcott characterizes it "emphatic monotony," since the evangelist will repeat identical phraseology without ceasing. Indeed, the reiteration and development of three pairs of ideas: Witness and Truth, Glory and Light, Judgment and Life is unique.[18] Μαρτυρεῖν, μαρτυρία are employed 47 times; ἀληθειά, 25; δόξα, δοξάζεσθαι, 42 times; φῶς, 23; κρίνω, κρίσις, 30 times; ζωή, ζῆν, 52. Note also σημεῖον, 17 times; γινώσκειν, 55; κόσμος, 78; πιστεύειν, 98; ἔργον, 23; ὄνομα, 25; πατήρ, 136. Any one who will trace the use of the three pairs of ideas listed here will feel that the apparent

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[17] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*
[18] Westcott.

monotony contains a marvelous depth and fulness, Westcott has assured. Obviously it is impossible to examine all this Christian evidence opposed to Gnosticism. But the prologue has intimated the methodology of John in refutation. Good critics however persistently stand out against interpreting John as an apology. Nevertheless for the present writer 20:30-31, John's own declaration of aim, will settle the issue. Thus Plummer decides about verse 31:

> "The conclusion of the Gospel is an echo of the beginning (1. 4, 12); and it once more gives a flat contradiction to Gnostic teaching. (1) Jesus is no mere man to whom a divine being was for a time united, but the Messiah and very God. (2) Eternal life is to be obtained, not by intellectual enlightenment, but by faith in the name of Jesus."[19]

The Fourth Gospel refuted Gnosticism by presenting Advent truth. Likewise 1 John manifests polemic against the Gnostic, albeit in different style from John. A gospel record could not be expected to answer heresy directly, since biography was intended up to a certain degree. But an epistle may apply doctrine to the reader without hesitation. Thus all the letters of John are related to the Gospel by theology, although quite distinct from it through personal application of dogma.

According to Westcott, the style of 1 John bears a close resemblance to that of the Gospel both in vocabulary and sentence structure. For in both works there is repetition of the same fundamental words and phrases and the same vivid, if monotonous, simplicity of construction. Some believe that the Epistle was not primarily an apology, though granting that serious error has risen before the writer here. Yet it seems more accurate to judge that the book does, in the main, offer polemical

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[19] Op. cit., in loc.

argument. To be sure, 1 John must not be compared to an ordinary apologia. Rather it will suggest the scriptural method of answering heresy. Compare Jude 3, 20 ff., Philippians 3:1 ff., John 20:31. The Bible has always replied to heretical views by inculcating truth, ethics, and faith, not simply by denying falsehood and stating correct doctrine.

While some agree with regard to the possible divisions in 1 John, no analysis of the book has been followed generally. The aphoristic character of the testimony no doubt must be the cause for this. Indeed, all endeavor to analyze the Epistle should perhaps be omitted as useless on that very count.[20] Nevertheless it does not appear difficult to trace the apologetic thought, if the key word γράφω is noticed. Thirteen times John uses the one word.

1:4, the first occurrence of γράφω , will expound an aim lying behind the whole Epistle. Westcott has comprehended the significance of ταῦτα , on which everything in the verse turns:

> "The phrase, *these things*, is not however co-extensive with *that which* [verse 3] . St. John has present to his mind both the general revelation of the Gospel (*we declare*) of which the end was to create spiritual fellowship between God and man and men; and the particular view of it which he purposes to lay before his readers (*we write*) with a view to establishing the fulness of joy in the Church."[21]

Ἡμεῖς , incidentally, must be emphatic; also γράφομεν, since this verb has been employed in the singular everywhere else throughout the Epistle. Brooke discerns aright:

> "The αὐτόπται have always borne their witness by preaching or teaching. Now there is much that the survivors, or survivor, must write down. In this context ἡμεῖς must mean 'we who have seen and heard'. . . .

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[20] Brooke.

[21] *The Epistles of St. John*, *in loc*.

> The conditions are satisfied if even one survivor only is speaking in the name of those of whom he is the last representative, especially if he is addressing Christians among whom the later survivors had spent their last years."[22]

One commentator similarly has determined the force of ἵνα κ. τ λ.: "The fulfilment of Christian joy depends upon the realisation of fellowship. The same thought underlies the other passages where the phrase occurs." World religions may afford pleasure for a time, only Christianity will furnish deep-seated satisfaction for the whole man all the days. Now, the Mediator through whom such communion is made possible John had specified in verse 1, "the Word of life." Consequently verse 4, as well as the first verse, must allude to Christ--whom Gnostics misunderstood. Findlay has written therefore:

> "Already in St. John's old age the solvents of philosophical analysis were being applied to the Gospel history and doctrine. The Godhead incarnate, the manifestation of the infinite in the finite, of the eternal in the temporal --this was impossible and self-contradictory; we know beforehand, the wise of the world said, that such things cannot be. . . . The incarnation, the miracles, the resurrection, the ascension--what are they but a beautiful poetic dream, a pictorial representation of spiritual truth, from which we must extract for ourselves a higher creed, leaving behind the supernatural as so much mere wrappage and imaginative dress. . . . this the Gnosticism of the later apostolic age was already, in its peculiar method and dialect, beginning to make out."[23]

After indicating the damage to fellowship which sin will cause, and the remedy for trespassing, 1:5-10, John affirms that he wrote thus in order to prevent sinning, 2:1. Ταῦτα must refer to the whole Epistle, not merely to the previous verses. And Τεκνία, a diminutive, will express the tender affection of an aged man. When he wishes to emphasize

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[22] I. C. C., in loc.

[23] *Fellowship in the Life Eternal*, in loc.

the importance of his thought, he naturally falls into the language of endearment.[24] Note the significant present tense γράφω, as in 1:4. Concerning ἁμάρτητε Westcott has observed:

> "The phrase is absolute. The thought is of the single act (ἁμάρτητε) not of the state (ἁμαρτάνητε); and the tense is decisive against the idea that the apostle is simply warning his disciples not to draw encouragement for license from the doctrine of forgiveness [1:9]. His aim is to produce the completeness of the Christ-like life (*v*. 6).
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> The difference of the aor. and pres. conj. in connexion with ἵνα is well illustrated by John v. 20, 23; vi. 28 f."[25]

Inasmuch as Gnosticism treated evil lightly,[26] the point in 2:1 cannot be mistaken. Brooke will lead to the proper viewpoint:

> "The recognition of the universality of sin, from which even Christians are not actually free, might lead to a misconception of its true character. Men might easily pass too lenient judgments on its heinousness, and ignore the responsibility of those who give way to its promptings. If it is impossible for any one, even the Christian, to escape sin, why condemn with such uncompromising severity failures for which man cannot reasonably be held responsible? Why strive so earnestly against what is inevitable? The writer hastens to warn his readers against such conclusions. Sin is wholly antagonistic to the Christian ideal; his whole object in trying to set out that ideal more clearly is to prevent sin, not to condone it."[27]

2:7-8 explain the commandment laid upon believers, which John has written down for them here. The affectionate term Ἀγαπητοί (verse 7) will recall Τεκνία, verse 1. From the beginning Christians were in possession of a command, "from the time ye first heard the Gospel word."[28] This "old" injunction is defined at once: "The old commandment is the word which ye heard" (A. S. V.). Compare verses 4-5.

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[24] Brooke.
[25] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*
[26] Alleman.
[27] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*
[28] Fausset.

Accordingly Findlay maintains:

> "Christianity and its law of love were no untried novelty, no fresh invention, like the Gnostic rules and speculations that were coming into vogue; they were of long standing in this region by the end of the first century, and in the circle where this late-surviving Apostle of Jesus Christ presides. He has nothing to impart to his readers, or to impose upon them, other than they have known and held from the beginning. Naturally, as it is with old men, St. John's thoughts turn to the past; standing upon the ground of the Church's settled faith and practice, he challenges innovators. . . ."[29]

Verse 8 has been joined intimately to the preceding through πάλιν. This word commences another description of the same law, not another command.[30] Compare John 16:28. Not only is the love injunction "old," but also καινή, "new in kind" (Robertson; not "new in time," νέος). By such a paradox the apostle would stress the unique quality of Christianity and its bidding. One paragraph from Westcott can summarize the entire teaching in verse 8:

> "The commandment of love was new to the disciples who had followed Christ when He gave it them on the eve of the Passion in a new form and with a new sanction. It was new also to the believers whom St. John addressed in proportion as they were now enabled to apprehend with fresh power the Person and Life of Christ. The 'newness' is relative to the position of those to whom St. John writes. While life advances the Gospel must be always new."[31]

Jude has demonstrated to what lengths of bitterness the Gnostic would proceed, verse 8 ff. Compare 1 John 2:9-11.

With intimate, pastoral address, 2:12-14, the author expands his reason for writing the Epistle (briefly stated in 1:4) ere continuing on. Τεκνία, verse 12, as before (verse 1), probably will signify all the

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[29] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

[30] Brooke.

[31] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

readers. They are receiving the letter because their sins have been forgiven, that is, 1 John with its message was sent to true children of God. Verse 13, however, distinguishes between mature and less mature believers, namely, "fathers" and "young men." The former group were in the writer's mind because they possessed ripe knowledge of Christ from experience, while the latter were addressed since they conquered the Adversary. Our Epistle, consequently, was being directed to successful Christians with varying degrees of maturity. How then can the critical witness of 1:5 ff. be reconciled with this destination? Apparently verse 14 is intended to clarify the matter. Thus Brooke, for one, would elucidate the fourteenth verse, making γράφω (verses 12-13) an allusion to the letter as a whole and ἔγραψα (verse 14) a reference to the previous words of the Epistle. Certainly that does seem the most obvious explanation for both tenses. A quotation from Brooke ought to be supplied:

> "For the moment the writer's thought turn back to what he has already written. In what he has already said he has treated them as παιδία, still in need of discipline and guidance. . . . It had been necessary to treat them, young and old alike, as not yet 'grown up.' The false pleas which many among them were only too ready to listen to, if not to urge, must be sharply and clearly exposed. Statements which they might well make, perhaps in some cases had made, must be called quite definitely 'lies.' He must not shrink from plain language. But he could never have ventured to use the language which he had not hesitated to address to them, had it not been for the great progress which they had already made in the things of Christ. Strength and experience were really theirs. Reproofs could be uttered and appeals made with full confidence of success."[32]

Doubtless Gnosticism was the most potent and subtle foe that the Church has ever faced, hence the vigor in the present testimony. Compare verses

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[32] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

15-17.

Verse 21 reveals something confirmatory of the idea expressed by γράφω, verses 12-14. For the apostle has declared: "I have not written to you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth"(A. S. V.). But for such knowledge as the readers had acquired from personal experience, it would be useless to make an appeal for discernment of grievous heresy, verse 18 ff.[33] Many antichrists had arisen, whom Christians were to recognize by using the truth as a standard. The center of doctrinal interest in this Epistle is naught else but the Incarnation, "in which St. John finds the single guarantee of a true manifestation of the Divine Life in man, and the single channel for its permanent communication to men."[34] Westcott has ably developed verse 21:

> "St. John gives two grounds for his writing: 1. Because his readers know the truth. 2. Because no lie is of the truth. The first witnesses to the necessary sympathy between writer and readers: the second explains the occasion of the particular warning. . . . the absolute irreconcileableness of any falsehood with 'the Truth' is laid down as a clear rule for the protection of Christians in the presence of seductive teachers."[35]

With verse 26 John alludes once more to the heretical character of antichrists, verse 18 ff. He had spoken of the false teachers under their spiritual aspect as ἀντίχριστοι; now he will speak of them under their outward aspect as leading men away from Christian fellowship.[36] The danger is very present and real, πλανώντων. Brooke is correct when he asserts:

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[33] Brooke,

[34] Law.

[35] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

[36] Westcott.

> "The words are not aimless. They serve to close the subject, and in connection with what follows to account for the brevity of his treatment of it. The writer has only to call to their remembrance the essential features of their own faith, and the grave issues raised by the antichristian teaching. The chrism which they have received will enable them to do the rest for themselves."[37]

To this citation may be added a worth-while observation of Findlay's:

> "The Antichrists of St. John's last hour, the opponents then most to be dreaded by the Church, were teachers of false doctrine. They 'deny that Jesus is the Christ' (ver. 22). This denial is other than that which the same words had denoted fifty years before. It is not the denial of Jewish unbelief, a refusal to accept Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah; it is the denial of Gnostic error, the refusal to admit the Divine Sonship of Jesus and the revelation of the Godhead in manhood through His person. . . . Such a refusal makes the knowledge of both impossible; neither is God understood as Father, nor Jesus Christ as Son, by these misbelievers. To 'confess' or 'deny the Son' is in effect to 'hold' or 'not to hold' the Father (ver. 23). The man who in this way 'denies the Father and the Son,' he is 'the antichrist' and 'the liar' (ver. 22). His denial negatives the central truth of Christianity, as St. John conceived it; it dissolves the bond which gives unity and force to the entire new covenant, and nullifies the Gospel absolutely. The nature of the person of Christ, in St. John's view, was not a question of transcendental dogma or theological speculation; there lay in it the vital point of an experimental and working Christian belief."[38]

Chapter 5 introduces still another emphasis, namely, saving faith. So the last appearance of γράφω is correlated with πιστεύω, 5:13. Ἔγραψα probably does not represent an epistolary aorist, but may point back to verses 1-12,[39] most directly to verses 11-12.[40] Again Findlay has sensed the trend of argument:

> "The whole letter is written to deepen the sense of security in the hearts of faithful Christian men, to promote the inward peace and firm confidence toward God which

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[37] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*
[38] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*
[39] Robertson.
[40] Law.

> are essential to vigorous growth and sustained activity in the spiritual life. Such assurance belongs of right to all those 'who believe on the name of the Son of God.' But they do not all possess it. . . . St. John has felt the flagging pulse of believers whose faith once beat high and strong; he has marked the downcast face and troubled look of men daunted by persecution or browbeaten by loud argument; he knows that some of his readers, in spite of themselves, are bewildered in the mazes of theosophy and the flashing sword-play of dialectic. . . . Such dangers were incessant amidst the turmoil and stress of the Church's warfare in the Apostolic times."[41]

First from one angle, then another, therefore, the apostle exposes gnostic action and principles. Further reply will be noticed in his two shorter epistles.

2 John has been called a small edition of 1 John. Certainly the second Epistle manifests the closest kinship in language and thought to the first.[42] Findlay has appraised 2 and 3 John well:

> "These brief notes, or dispatches, appear to have been thrown off by the Apostle in the ordinary course of his Church-administration, and may have occupied in their composition but a few moments of his time; in all likelihood, he wrote scores of such letters, bearing upon public or private affairs, during his long presidency over the Christian societies of Asia Minor."[43]

The destination of 2 John has never been settled. According to Robertson, however, the obvious way of taking it is to a woman of distinction in one of the churches, although there seems no way of judging finally whether "the elect lady" is a woman or a church. Still, no matter what identity be fixed on for the readers, verses 7-11 can present further warning against errorists.

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[41] Op. cit., in loc.
[42] Westcott.
[43] Op. cit., in loc.

Fausset discloses the relationship between verse 7 and the preceding: As love and truth go hand in hand (verses 3-4), John must now caution against teachers of untruth. Πλάνοι will suggest 1 John 2:26, ἐξῆλθον, 2:19, ἀντίχριστος, 4:3. The participial clause, οἱ μὴ κ. τ. λ., has not only stated a fact about the heretics, but marked off their character.[44] Docetic Gnosticism is being opposed.[45] No doubt the chief difference between 1 John 4:2 and verse 7 lies in the tense of the participle, "come." Brooke therefore has remarked on the seventh verse:

> "By the use of ἐρχόμενον instead of ἐληλυθότα the confession is taken out of all connection with time and made timeless. In the First Epistle stress was laid on the historical fact and its permanent consequences. Here the writer regards it as a continuous fact. The Incarnation is not only an event in history. It is an abiding truth. It is the writer's view that humanity has been taken up into the Deity. The union is permanent and abiding."[46]

Verse 8 contains admonition for the Christian to take heed to himself because of widespread delusion.[47] Note the emphatic contrast between words of like sound: ἀπολέσητε and ἀπολάβητε. Teachers had aided the readers (ἠργασάμεθα), yet they were in danger of losing the returns possible. The "full reward" is the whole day's wage that each worker could be paid (1 Cor. 3:8, Robertson), if he would prove faithful.

More characterization of the Gnostic has been supplied in verse 9. Such a heretic was acclaiming himself a progressive (προάγων). So the writer must denounce all falsehood which "advances in bold confidence beyond the limits set to the Christian faith."[48] True progress will always

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[44] Westcott.
[45] Robertson.
[46] Op. cit., in loc.
[47] Fausset.
[48] Westcott.

build on the past. But the errorist desired to enter new regions of thought, leaving the old behind. In consequence he is bereft of a foundation. "'Progress' is delusive which cuts itself off from the historic facts of the Christian faith."[49] Faithful continuance with "the doctrine," however, will bring a living possession of God, as He is now revealed by the fulness of a Fatherly relation in "the Father and the Son."[50]

The context must determine the bearing of verse 10 on Christian hospitality. "Casual visits of strangers" evidently are not involved. Those to whom John would refuse hospitable reception frankly present themselves as the exponent of new thought (verse 9). By ἔρχεται, therefore, is to be understood nothing but an official visit.[51] A conditional statement of the first class has been employed, εἴ τις κ. τ. λ., so real a danger exists. And if χαίρειν will intimate "greeting" (A. S. V.), not "God speed" (A. V.), it can very well be related to the peril of allowing gnostic propagandists to spread their tenets in home and church,--which is assuming that the men were known and not strangers.[52] Heretics forfeit all right to the hospitality common among believers. Fausset has expounded the basic idea of verse 10:

> "True love is combined with hearty separation from all that is false, whether persons or doctrines. Misbelief destroys faith, the source of love, so love itself: therefore love abhors it as overthrowing Christianity, the centre of love's affection."[53]

Verse 11 will furnish the grounds on which the injunctions of verse

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[49] Alleman.
[50] Westcott.
[51] Westcott.
[52] Robertson.
[53] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*

10 are based.[54] The word κοινωνεῖ signifies more than participation in definite acts. It will extend to fellowship with the very character of which deeds are the outcome.[55] Robertson points out that the churches often met in private dwellings (Rom. 16:5, Col. 4:15); and so, if these travelling speakers were allowed to teach heresy in a home and were afterwards sent on with endorsement, as Apollos was from Ephesus to Corinth (Acts 18:27), there would be no way of escaping responsibility for the harm done. Thereby 2 John has applied the truth of the first Epistle relative to separating from apostasy.

2 John forbade hospitality to the errorist, but 3 John must consider a wrong denial of courtesy, 2 and 3 John may be the shortest books of the Bible;[56] still they seem none the less important, distinctive, or pointed. Furthermore, Robertson believes that the same gnostic deceivers are at work in 3 John as in the other Johannine Epistles. If so, verses 9-10 will clarify this.

According to verse 9 the aged Evangelist himself was opposed by a church leader, and that in spite of correspondence on the subject. Can the ninth verse refer to 2 John? Brooke has weighed the evidence carefully:

> "In spite of the close resemblance in form between the Second and Third Epistles, which certainly favours the view that they are companion Epistles, and the many points of similarity in the circumstances of the Churches to which, or to members of which, they are addressed, the context of verse 9 makes it almost impossible to see in the words ἔγραψά τι τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ a reference to the Second Epistle. . . . It must, of course, be admitted that Diotrephes probably favoured, or at least condoned,

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[54] Brooke.
[55] Westcott.
[56] Findlay.

> the Gnostic or other teaching which the writer condemns in the Second Epistle."[57]

That epistle of John's was surely not designed by the Spirit for the universal church, else it would have been preserved.[58] The ready pen of Findlay will sketch the occasion for 3 John:

> "*Pride of place* was the sin of Diotrephes. Whether he was the Bishop of his Church, in the sense in which Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna were a generation later, does not appear. It is questionable whether monepiscopacy (the rule of a single bishop placed above the elders) existed at this date, though Asia Minor was its earliest seat and tradition assigns its foundation to St. John. The dominance of Diotrephes may have been that of personal force and social status, rather than of official right. In any case, the occurrence illustrates the tendency to concentrate power in a single hand, which gave rise to the Episcopate of the second century. It is noticeable that the matters in which Diotrephes offends St. John--refusing to admit travelling brethren and attempting to 'hinder' and even 'excommunicate' those who would entertain them--appear to have been originally a principal charge of the separated bishops, viz. the superintendence of hospitality and of inter-church relations. It is conceivable that Diotrephes was one of the first experiments in Episcopacy; and that, puffed up by his new office, he had rebelled against his father in Christ and refused to take direction from Ephesus."[59]

Verse 11 adds the thought of a possible visit and rebuke from John, because the situation is dangerous. A twofold peril had arisen here. Not only would this congregation be cut off from the fellowship of many stalwart Christians, but it might afford harbor to the anti-Christian doctrine then invading the Johannine district for lack of a testimony against its subtle voice.[60] From φιλοπρωτεύων (verse 9) Westcott deems it perhaps a reasonable conjecture that Diotrephes accounted the reception of brethren in sympathy with John an invasion of his authority. When

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[57] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*
[58] Fausset.
[59] *Op. cit.*, *in loc.*
[60] Findlay.

heresy was making strong inroads, however, the apostle felt obliged to take every precaution, that it might not affect the churches. So his third Epistle plainly stated the misdeed of Diotrephes.

The idea dominant in the Fourth Gospel, it was shown earlier, related to conflict, namely, the perpetual opposition between good and evil, light and darkness. Beside, the three Epistles of John view the cosmos in similar fashion. But a final word from the Evangelist and likely the closing message of Scripture (certainly a ripe conclusion for the whole Bible), Revelation, will surmount all other Johannine productions through graphic testimony to the outcome of good and evil, after their prolonged struggle together. Revelation may be distinguished from previous writings not so much because of its apocalyptic nature, as its large scope of reference. Old and New Testament dispensations are treated alike, and their individual consummation detailed. Revelation appears to be the very apex of divine witness to man, as well as a last message. Therefore, an all-embracing, if concise, refutation of Gnosticism should be looked for in the book. To be sure, its apologia will harmonize with that of a Gospel, more than an epistle (although by rights the work is epistolary, 1:4 ff.). That is to say, the objective character of apocalyptic literature demands indirect apology, just as in the case with a Gospel. Whenever Revelation has bordered closely upon an epistle, as in chapters 2-3, direct answers to heresy, of course , are forthcoming. So our procedure will be examination of the book for all the main features in gnostic teaching, along with their rebuttal.

Esotericism ill accords with the prologue of Revelation or the spirit manifest throughout. Indeed, the first word in this volume has

indicated its exoteric temper. W. Scott would construe the opening phrase of the book a title: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." That granted, the entire work must witness against esoteric thought. To be sure, terms like δεῖξαι (verse 1), σημεῖον (12:1, cf. ἐσήμανεν, 1:1), ἐμαρτύρησεν and cognate words (verse 1), and εἶδεν (verse 2) are not infrequent. Verse 1 does not forbid the disclosure to any Christian.[61] In verse 5 Christ Himself is named "the faithful witness." Furthermore, verse 3 has not been duplicated elsewhere in Scripture. One commentator has observed:

> "*Apocalypse* is applied to no Old Testament book [nor any other New Testament portion]. Daniel is the nearest approach to it; but what Daniel was told to *seal* and *shut up till the time of the end* (Dan. xii. 4), St. John (ch. xxii. 10), now that *the time is at hand* (*v.* 3), is directed to *reveal*."[62]

Compare 22:6 ff.

Chapters 2 and 3 declare plainly that syncretism was abroad as a leaven. 2:2, for instance, has commended Ephesus for uncovering the pretension of false apostles. Perhaps these men were itinerant missionaries from the Nicolaitan party, verse 6. Paul had foretold such teachers (Gnostics) in Acts 20:29, according to Robertson. Swete interprets the deep significance of Nicolaitanism:

> "He [John] saw in the Nicolaitan proposals not the mere abandonment of a primitive Church order, not only the adoption of a weak concordat with the pagan society by which the Church was environed, but an indirect attack upon the sanctities of the Christian life. . . . If words meant anything to the writer of the Apocalypse, he regarded the question raised by the Nicolaitans as vital, and the danger as imminent. . . . When even Christian prophecy, in the person of the Thyatiran Jezebel, was advocating Nicolaitan principles, it was time for the

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[61] Swete.

[62] Fausset, *op. cit.*, *in loc.*

> prophet of the Apocalypse to speak with no uncertain voice; and his words (ii. 22 f.), viewed in this light, are not more severe than the occasion demanded.
>
> The Nicolaitan controversy raises the whole question of the relation of Christianity in Asia to Paganism at the moment when St. John wrote. In no part of the Empire was paganism more strenuous or resourceful, and in none, so far as we can judge, was the conflict between the old religion and the new so nearly brought to a head. . . . When the Apocalypse was written the conflict had begun all along the line."[63]

For Vaughan the Nicolaitans must be linked with Antinomians. Swete too will admit that they are the spiritual descendants of the libertines against whom Paul protested vehemently. Verse 15 points out that "the doctrine of the Nicolaitans" is identical with that of Balaam,[64] verse 14. Zahn and others have connected verse 24 with Gnosticism. Charles, who can mention their viewpoint with approval, summarizes it:

> "These false teachers held that the spiritual man should know the deep things of Satan, that he should take part in the heathen life of the community, two of the most prominent characteristics of which were its sacrificial feasts and immoral practices. Though he outwardly shared in this heathen life, nevertheless as a spiritual man. . . . he remained inwardly unaffected by it and so asserted his superiority over it."[65]

Similarly Westcott has affirmed that the seven epistles to Asia form a commentary on the idea of many antichrists, 1 John 2:18. Compare Revelation 2:2, 6, 9, 13-14, 20, 24, 3:3, 8 ff., 15 ff.

Chapter 5 ff. will contain a sufficient reply to gnostic Theology Proper. Especially in chapter 5 are Father and Son revealed as equally God, although the Latter had become incarnate. Beckwith does not exaggerate when he concludes from his Christological study:

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[63] *Op. cit.*, pp. lxxi-lxxii.
[64] *Beckwith*.
[65] *I. C. C.*, *in loc*.

> "The book stands alone in its vivid relations of the glorified Christ. While its doctrine does not in its essential significance go beyond that of the Fourth Gospel, where the divinity of the Logos and the eternal glory of the Son are plainly declared (e. g. 1:1 f., 17:5) or beyond the teaching of Paul (e. g. Col. 2:9, Phil. 2:6), yet nowhere else are found these wonderful scenes revealing to the eye and ear the majesty of Christ's ascended state, and these numerous utterances expressing in terms applicable to God alone the truth of his divine nature and power . . . . In some instances the writer might seem to identify Christ with God without difference of person; and for the most part in the representations mentioned above the idea of a 'subordination' of the Son to the Father seems to be absent. . . .
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> It is worth while to notice the Apocalyptist's use of personal names in designating Christ. In the prologue and the epilogue (1:1-8, 22:6-21) he uses the customary names, Jesus, Jesus Christ, or Lord Jesus. In the body of the work (1:9-22:5), the usual designation is the Lamb . . . . The Lamb is the Christ in the highest exaltation of his divine glory; he is likewise the Christ who has suffered death to redeem a people unto God. The glorified Christ and the Lamb that had been slain are not thought of apart from each other; and the Apocalyptist is not conscious of any antimony; there is no trace of an effort to introduce a mediating unity."[66]

In a like vein Charles would expound Revelation Christology. To him the teaching of John on this subject is very comprehensive. He lists the following divisions: the historical Christ, the exalted Christ, the unique Son of God, the great High Priest, the pre-existent Christ, the divine Christ.

Gnostic cosmology is also dismissed by Revelation. No doubt the salient testimony in opposition to this error will be noticed from angelology. Swete has examined the pertinent material and decided:

> "Beyond any other book either in the Old Testament or in the New, it [Revelation] occupies itself with the inhabitants of the unseen order; even of apocalyptic writings the Enoch literature alone perhaps is more fruitful in

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[66] The Apoc. of John, pp. 312-316.

> revelations of this kind. The Apocalypse of John, however, is singularly free from the wild speculations of Jewish angelology. . . . No charge seems to be too great for an angel to undertake, and none too ordinary. . . . Little light is thrown on such a speculative topic as the distribution of the angelic host into orders or ranks. The greater angels are distinguished by their superior strength or more splendid surroundings. Only one angel receives a name. . . .
>
> The Apocalypse is comparatively silent as to fallen angels and evil spirits. . . . The Seer is able to foresee the course of Satanic activity from his own age to the end."[67]

Christ always evinces superiority over the angels as One divine, chapter 5. Likewise some will agree with W. Scott, who discovered Messiah in angelic form several times through the book:

> "There is a pretty general consensus of thought amongst the early expositors of the Apocalypse in rightly regarding the angel here as meaning Christ to the exclusion of all others. 'Another angel' is three times used of Christ in the apocalyptic visions (chaps. 8.3; 10.1; 18.1). This title is one which supposes reserve and distance. The appellation 'Lamb' is characteristic of the Apocalypse as a whole, and of the Seals in particular, and seems to be the chosen title expressive of Christ's interest in His saints, as also of their intimacy and nearness to Him. Under the trumpet series of judgments Christ morally retires and invests Himself in an angelic title and character. When the saints come distinctly and prominently on to the prophetic scene then the title Lamb appears (see chaps. 7.17; 14.1, etc.)."[68]

22:8-9 can demonstrate the relative position of angels:

> "And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God" (A. S. V.).

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[67] Op. cit., pp. clxix-clxx.

[68] Expos. of the Rev. of J. C., p. 180.

Revelation indirectly assails dualism, too. This may be learned from chapter 20, if not the entire book. From the first page to the last Revelation is concerned with earth. A wicked cosmos must be punished; so will one day feel the heavy hand of retribution. But the fact still exists: God has not finished with earth; there is a new one coming, 21:1. Had He no more earthly purposes, the Apocalypse would probably have been shortened to a few chapters. All of chapters 6-18 might be omitted simply, were there no future for the world. God need not punish man upon earth, if a place of eternal woe is in store for the ungodly. On the other hand, He should purge the cosmos, provided it has not been essentially wicked and therefore cannot be restored. A pristine globe delighted the Lord, so that He took pleasure in walking on it as the friend of man. Similarly a purified earth (fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant, to be sure) could satisfy His holiness, it seems. Charles, a pre-eminent authority in Jewish apocalypse, has affirmed:

> "Before the year 100 B. C. it was generally believed in Judaism that the Messianic Kingdom would last for ever on the present earth. . . . but by the date just mentioned the earth had come to be regarded in Judaism as wholly unfit for the manifestation of this kingdom except in a temporary character. The dualism which had begun to affect the religious forecasts of religious thinkers in the 2nd century B. C. succeeded in leavening wholly their expectations in the 1st. . . . Hence in 1 Enoch xci.-civ., Pss. Sol. i.-xvi., the Messianic Kingdom is declared to be of temporary duration on the present earth, and the goal of the risen righteous to be not this transitory kingdom, but heaven itself after the final judgment. . . ."[69]

This same critic does not sympathize with aught but literal interpretation of chapter 20. Three reasons are adduced:

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[69] Op. cit., ii. p. 142.

> "1. The earliest expounders of the Apocalypse, such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Victorinus, quite rightly take the words in a literal sense of an actual reign of Christ with the glorified martyrs on earth. The spiritualizing method which emanated from Alexandria put an end to all trustworthy exegesis of the Apocalypse, when adopted in its entirety with reference to the Apocalypse. The meaning assigned by the votaries of this method became wholly arbitrary, and every student found in the Apocalypse what he wished to find. . . . The earliest expounders were right, as they were in close touch with the apostolic time.
>
> 2. Moreover, the Talmud, and other Jewish writings, and specially the Jewish Apocalypses, attest a literal reign--and no other--of the Messiah, so far as they deal with the question.
>
> 3. The context itself is wholly against taking the words in a spiritual sense. . . . Hence attempts to revive the spiritualizing interpretation of the Millennial Kingdom are to be deplored from every standpoint."[70]

Not till millennial exegesis degenerated into carnalism was the literal interpretation abandoned.[71] In the face of such harmony among early writers, how much force can the dictum from Milligan possess: "No interpretation hitherto proposed has succeeded in commending itself to anything like general acceptance"? Possibly, then, Revelation did lift a voice against dualism.

Beyond a doubt the Apocalypse witnesses to incarnation truth, and by so much will oppose Docetism. Chapter 1 may prove this better than any other portion. With the first vision to be experienced, John beheld the Son of man in a full blaze of glory, verses 13-16. The very clothing of Christ was impressive, according to verse 13. Raiment for God the Father is not described thus. Nevertheless the garments intimate something more than earthly apparel, Hort judges:

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[70] Op. cit., ii. p. 185.
[71] Fausset.

> "Not improbably the conception is that of sacred repose. The work of the glorified Lord is not the kind of work for which he wore the dress of ordinary occupations."[72]

Next the apostle has discerned an unusual head on the Figure. His head and hair were snow white, verse 14, "white with the blinding splendour of His holiness and of His glory."[73] God the Father has been shown in like manner, Daniel 7:9. Since only the Messiah became incarnate, of course, He alone need be envisioned as fully as verses 13-16 manifest. (That a human personality is under consideration will appear from verse 13, "one like unto a son of man," A. S. V. But were Docetic ideas correct, the author would have avoided perhaps everything anthropomorphic with respect to Christ. However, he had enjoyed intimate personal fellowship with Jesus Christ on earth, so that his testimony now seems the more valuable.) Then the eyes draw attention to themselves, because they were "as a flame of fire," verse 14. Swete has elucidated the common metaphor:

> "The penetrating glance (Apringius: 'inevitable lumen oculorum'), which flashed with quick intelligence, and when need arose with righteous wrath, was noticed by those who were with our Lord in the days of His Flesh (Mc. iii. 5. . . .), and finds its counterpart, as the Seer now learns, in the Risen and Ascended Life."[74]

Extended beneath the long robe could also be observed unusual feet, verse 15, "denoting at once an unwearied endurance and a resistless strength."[75] Similarly the voice commanded reverence, verse 15. Divine speech can be of the gentlest or the most appalling nature, as occasion requires.[76] In His right hand were "seven stars," verse 16.

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[72] The Apoc. of St. John I-III, in loc.
[73] Vaughan.
[74] Op. cit., in loc.
[75] Vaughan.
[76] Swete.

That is to say, Christ rules the church "angels" by His own authority,[77] the "right hand" signifying just that, 2:1, Matthew 27:29. Furthermore, out of His mouth "went a sharp twoedged sword," verse 16, symbolizing judicial authority.[78] And last of all, "his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength," verse 16. Swete has recalled a parallel in the Gospel record:

> "If the John of the Apocalypse is the son of Zebedee, he could scarcely have failed to think of the Transfiguration which anticipated the glory of the ascended Christ, when ἔλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος (Mt. xvii. 2)."[79]

All of Christ was glorified after the ascension. Yet nothing suggests an essential change in the incarnate state. On the contrary, all the earthly characteristics acquired in an Advent of humiliation have been exalted, their purpose already fulfilled. Compare the recurring title for Christ, "Lamb." The same One who was slain is alive forever, verse 18, 5:6, yet bearing marks of His death.

Finally, gnostic soteriology is not countenanced by Revelation. Chapter 22 in particular has issued a gospel invitation to all the unsaved, as the book closes. Verse 10 is different from esoteric Gnosticism and its soteriological literature, when it forbids secrecy about the truth revealed. Verse 11 will convey perhaps a tone of irony;[80] for this method of appeal can also be used effectively with some. Verses 12-13 remind that the Advent comes speedily and with it the end of opportunity for all. Verse 14 has pronounced blessing on the saved, while

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[77] W. Scott.

[78] Charles.

[79] *Ibid.*, *in loc*.

[80] Beckwith.

That is to say, Christ rules the church "regular" by His own authority,[77] the "right hand" signifying just that, 5:1, Matthew 27:29. Furthermore, out of His mouth "went a sharp twoedged sword," verse 16, symbolizing judicial authority.[78] And last of all, "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength," verse 16. Swete has recalled a parallel in the Gospel record:

> "If the John of the Apocalypse is the son of Zebedee, he could scarcely have failed to think of the Transfiguration which anticipated the glory of the ascended Christ, when 'His face did shine as the sun' (Mt. xvii. 2)."[79]

All of Christ was glorified after the Ascension. Yet nothing suggests an essential change in the incarnate state. On the contrary, all the earthly characteristics acquired in an Advent of humiliation have been exalted, their purpose already fulfilled. Compare the recurring title for Christ, "Lamb." The same One who was slain is alive forever, verse 18, 5:6, yet bearing marks of His death.

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[77] B. Scott.

[78] Charles.

[79] Ibid., *in loc.*

[80] Beckwith.

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